

Dale Bywater
Executive Regional Managing Director

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By email only

19th September 2017

To all Trust Chairs & Chief Executives

Dear Colleagues

Launch of the Pilot Whistleblowers' Support Scheme

I am writing to ask for your support for the pilot of the Whistleblowers' Support Scheme, which is a key recommendation from Sir Robert Francis' 'Freedom to Speak Up' report which was published in 2015.

The review highlighted the harrowing experiences of some NHS staff who had raised concerns and called for the need to change the culture and improve the handling of concerns in the NHS. We know that providers have been working hard to support an open, honest and supportive culture.

One of the recommendations was that NHS Improvement should develop a scheme to support staff who had raised concerns and suffered detriment as a result to find alternative employment within the NHS.

NHS Improvement has now developed a scheme which has been designed with input from NHS staff who have raised concerns and have not been able to maintain their employment and which has built on the NHS England scheme for primary care.

We intend to undertake a pilot phase of the scheme which is due to be launched on 22nd September 2017. The scheme aims to provide:

1. Advice and assistance in relation to applications for appropriate employment in the NHS.
2. The development of a pool of NHS Employers who will offer work experience, training, shadowing opportunities or trial employment to people being supported by the scheme.

We are seeking your support in two key areas. The first is to identify members of your Trust to participate in a panel assessment process. Panels will be set up to assess applications to the scheme to ensure they meet the criteria.

These panels will involve a whistleblower, an independent member, and an employer representative. We already have around 40-50 volunteers but would welcome further support.

Training will be provided for panel members and sessions can be booked by writing directly to wendy.webster3@nhs.net who will be able to forward further details.

The second, a more important area in which we would like your support is to volunteer to provide a placement for someone in the scheme. This may involve training or work experience. It is not intended to be an offer of employment although we hope that the scheme will lead to the re-employment of NHS staff who have valuable skills and experience. The broad timetable is set out below:

- Applications will be invited and assessed up to 31st October 2017
- Circa 10 applicants will join the pilot phase and will commence on the scheme in November 2017.
- The pilot will run to around May 2018 and will be subject to an independent evaluation.

We will be running a series of workshops (London, Skipton House - 19th October, Taunton Regional Office - 20th October and Leeds, Quarry House – 23rd October) for employers to describe the scheme in more detail and to discuss the expectations of employers who participate and the support they can expect from NHS Improvement.

You can register for a place and further details by emailing wendy.webster3@nhs.net or NHSI.wbss@nhs.net and she will ensure a formal invite is sent to you.

We would very much appreciate it if you could provide senior representation to the workshops and then could consider whether your Trust could become part of the network of employers either during the pilot phase or in the future.

If you have any queries in the meantime please don't hesitate to contact either Wendy Webster, Employment Support Scheme Manager (wendy.webster3@nhs.net) or Steve Russell, Regional Director (London) (steverussell1@nhs.net) who is the SRO for the scheme.

Thank you in anticipation for your support.

Yours sincerely



Dale Bywater
Executive Regional Managing Director, Midlands and East