

## **Supporting Freedom to Speak up (Whistleblowing) in the NHS – Employment Support Scheme Newsletter – July 2017**

Welcome to the first newsletter from NHS Improvement to update you on our work in implementing the Freedom to Speak Up recommendations. We are hoping to be able to provide updates on progress bi-monthly as the scheme is developed.

### **Background**

The *Freedom to Speak Up* report published in 2015 set out the findings of the independent review undertaken by Sir Robert Francis QC into creating an open and honest culture in the NHS. The review highlighted the harrowing experiences of NHS staff that had raised concerns and called for the need to change the culture and improve the handling of concerns.

In response to the recommendations set out in the Freedom to Speak Up report, NHS Improvement has worked in partnership with NHS England and published a single national integrated whistleblowing policy to support NHS employees to formally report incidents or raise concerns and help standardise the way NHS organisations should support staff who raise concerns.

### **Developing an Employment (Whistleblower's) Support Scheme for Secondary Care**

The Freedom to Speak Up report also recommended that staff that have raised concerns and suffered detriment as a result, should be supported to find alternative employment within the NHS. A proposal is under development to deliver a Whistleblower's Support Scheme. The key aim of the scheme will be to support individuals who have raised concerns in the public interest about risk, malpractice or wrong doing in the NHS and have experienced employment difficulties as a result. NHS England is responsible for the delivery of the scheme for primary care with NHS Improvement leading implementation of the scheme for secondary care.

### **Design Group**

Following a workshop we held with stakeholders in March we have established an advisory group for the scheme. The group is formed of individuals from the whistleblowing community and representatives of employers and is chaired by Tracy Boylin (NHS Improvement/ Patients First). The aim of the group is to support NHS Improvement with the structure of the scheme and accompanying documentation. The first group meeting took place on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017 and we will provide an update on the progress of the group in the bi-monthly updates.

### **Employment Support Service Manager Appointment – Wendy Webster**

May I take this opportunity to introduce myself. I took up my new role as full time Employment Support Services Manager on 15<sup>th</sup> June. I have over 17 years' experience working within the NHS. My roles have covered a myriad of areas and have given me excellent experience in service management, redesign and improvement, patient safety and risk management, human resources and project/programme management; I have also previously served for 9 yrs. as a Magistrate. Prior to my work with the NHS, I was a Human Resources and Health and Safety director for a large international Plc.

This experience has given me a non-biased, non-judgemental and balanced approach to life/work and I hope to be able to demonstrate this within my new role.

I am looking forward to being able to continue and build upon the excellent work already started in the development of the new support scheme and hope to gain insight and input from all

stakeholders including whistle blowers, trusts and other organisations in order to develop a fair and supportive scheme.

I am happy to receive any correspondence/queries/input from interested parties via email: [Wendy.webster3@nhs.net](mailto:Wendy.webster3@nhs.net)

### **Whistleblowing conference**

An NHSI representative attended the Turn Up the Volume 2 conference which took place on 26th May 2016 and aimed to take the conversation further, make more links, and help bring about actions which make a difference.

Forty people attended the event, from all parts of the UK and beyond. Delegates were from a variety of backgrounds including health & care staff, patient and public whistleblowers and academics.

Throughout the day emphasis was placed on being on transforming ideas into action, and moving beyond stereotypes.

### **Work with other NHS Organisations**

As mentioned, we are working very closely with NHS England on the development of our scheme so that there is equity between those entering onto the primary care scheme they are running and the secondary care scheme we are running.

Towards the end of May we met with colleagues from the National Guardian's Office and discussed how we can work together to ensure the scheme fits in with any existing work they are progressing and how we can work more collaboratively in the future. Further meeting with the National Guardian's Office, NHS England and other organisations such as CQC and NHS Employers will be arranged to look at how we all work together in this area.

We have now set up a confidential email address for the Whistleblower's Support Scheme. This is [NHSI.wbss@nhs.net](mailto:NHSI.wbss@nhs.net). This is for the scheme correspondence only and should not be used to raise any protected disclosures.

We are particularly interested in employers who wish to know more about the scheme and would like further information or to be involved in the development and implementation of the scheme.

We are currently seeking to recruit panel members who will be required to review the applications to the scheme. It is anticipated that membership of the panel will comprise of the following individuals:- a former NHS whistleblower, a NHS professional who will understand the applicant's profession and have the relevant clinical/managerial expertise, an executive/ senior manager /clinician with experience of regulations and the framework for managing performer concerns where relevant and/or an equivalent NHS manager with the relevant knowledge and expertise. Should you be interested in a role as a potential panel member please contact Wendy Webster for more information.