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13 April 2022

Dear [REDACTED],

I want to thank you and your colleagues at [REDACTED] for your dedication and hard work during the pandemic and during the reset phase.

As the new National Guardian for Freedom to Speak Up in the NHS, I am acutely aware of how the pandemic and the ongoing pressures have highlighted the need for workers to have confidence in the speaking up process.

In early 2020, the National Guardian's Office (NGO) proposed a speak up review of NHS Ambulance Trusts. We proposed this review in light of consistent findings that the speaking up culture in these trusts tends to be more challenged despite their ratings by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Speak up reviews seek to identify learning, recognise innovation, and support improvement to ultimately improve the experience of workers, patients and the public.

During the pandemic, with ambulance trusts facing unprecedented pressures, it was not possible to undertake a review. However, as the pressures ease to some degree, we would like to commence the review. We hope that we can undertake the review in partnership with ambulance trusts.

The Culture Transformation Team at NHS E/I is working with Ambulance HR Directors and the Culture and Leadership Network for Ambulance Services (CALNAS) to support the development of compassionate and inclusive organisational cultures through collective leadership in ambulance trusts, which is scheduled to commence in Q1 2022/23.

The effects of organisational culture can be seen in the confidence people feel to speak up about anything that gets in the way of providing good care. It is this important aspect – the speaking up culture and arrangements – that is the focus of our review, and will complement the broader work on organisational culture with the Culture Transformation Team.

The speak up review will seek to describe the speaking up culture in ambulance trusts, including key barriers to speaking up. This will be wider than a look at the implementation of the Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian role, which is a crucial albeit additional piece in an organisation's speaking up culture and arrangements.

The first stage of our review involves desk-based research. We will consider data from various surveys, including the NHS Staff Survey, NGO FTSU Guardian surveys and speaking up case data, CQC inspection reports and trust board reports (including Freedom to Speak Up reports). We are aware that there have been reviews with the Ambulance Sector about staff experience (or specific elements of this), which we would like to include if you would be willing to share them.

We will share our initial findings with you following the desktop review.

The secondary research from the desktop review will inform and be followed by primary research to understand the perceptions of senior leaders, FTSU Guardians and workers by undertaking interviews and focus groups.

Given that pressures on ambulance trusts remain, we have designed our review to have minimal impact on the day-to-day delivery of the vital work you do.

We will use the data and information obtained to shed light on the speaking up culture, assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the FTSU Guardian role and the level of congruence between measures of speaking up and perceptions of those who work in ambulance trusts.

We are proposing to start this work in shortly, with a final report being published in September.

The results will be published in a report with recommendations on areas for improvement within ambulance trusts, across all organisations supported by FTSU Guardians, and the CQC inspection regime.

I hope you will support this review. We are interested in your reflections regarding the proposed timeframe, scope and approach for our review. It would be helpful if you could also nominate a suitable colleague to be our point of contact for this review. I would be grateful if you could get back to us on this by Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

Please find attached a document with more detailed information about our plans.



**National  
Guardian**

Freedom to Speak Up

If you have any questions, please do get in contact with me via my colleague  
[REDACTED] at [REDACTED] [@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk)

Kind regards,

**Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark**  
**National Guardian for the NHS**

[REDACTED] Freedom to Speak Up Guardian



# Speak up review of NHS ambulance trusts

## Terms of reference

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### Introduction

The [National Guardian's Office](#) (NGO) is undertaking a speak-up review of NHS ambulance trusts in England. We proposed this review in response to consistent findings that, despite their inspection ratings, the speaking up culture in NHS ambulance trusts tended to be more challenged compared to other trust types.

In April 2022, the National Guardian for the NHS, Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, wrote to the Chief Executives and Chairs of the ten individual NHS [ambulance trusts](#) in England and the Chief Executive of the health and social care regulator, the Care Quality Commission, about our proposed review.

You can find out more about the NGO [here](#).

### Purpose

Our review aims to inform understanding of the speaking up culture in ambulance trusts to identify learning and make recommendations for improvement.

### Objectives

We will seek to:

- Describe speaking up culture in ambulance trusts – including key challenges – and the congruence between speaking up measures and perceptions of ambulance trust workers.
- Recommend potential areas for improvement for ambulance trusts, across all organisations supported by Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, and the regulatory and inspection regime.

## Scope

[Speak up reviews](#) seek to identify learning, recognise innovation and support improvement, and improve the experience of workers, patients, and the public.

Our review will focus on speaking up culture and arrangements. We will work with stakeholders so that our review complements existing efforts to support wider cultural and related improvements in ambulance trusts.

We want to learn from the views and experiences of workers and will seek to facilitate this in multiple ways, including inviting workers to [contact us](#) directly. This includes volunteers, contractors and ex-colleagues, as all those in the workplace should feel confident and safe to speak up about anything which gets in the way of them doing a good job.

We will not investigate the handling of individual speaking up cases as part of this review.

## Approach and methodology

There are ten individual NHS [ambulance trusts](#) in England, plus the Isle of Wight NHS Trust, an integrated provider of healthcare services.

We will work with ambulance trusts and other stakeholders to carry out this review and promote and embed the learning.

Given that pressures on ambulance trusts remain, we have designed our review to have minimal impact on ambulance trusts' day-to-day delivery. Therefore, we will carry out our review remotely.

Our review will consist of two main phases:

1. Desk-based research, including analysis of publicly available and requested data and intelligence
2. Holding focus groups (including specific sessions for minority ethnic workers) and interviews with workers, Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and senior leaders

The second phase of our review will focus on five trusts selected to capture a cross-section of ambulance trusts.

Our assessment and recommendations will be based on good practice and relevant expectations and guidance, including those set out by the NGO and NHS England and Improvement.

## Governance and accountability

The National Guardian for the NHS will oversee the review and publish the findings and recommendations.

We will also inform our Accountability and Liaison Board (ALB) and Partnership Working Group of the progress of this review, including ratification of the resulting publication of the findings and recommendations by the ALB.

You can find out more about the NGO's governance arrangements [here](#).

## Outputs

We will publish a report of our findings.

We will also make recommendations to leaders on potential areas for improvement within ambulance trusts, across all organisations supported by Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, and the regulatory and supervisory regime.

We expect Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, irrespective of what organisation they support, to engage with the report and, working with their leaders, to assess local learning and improvement recommendations.

We will promote broader recommendations for national bodies or the system more generally and the National Guardian for the NHS will engage with relevant stakeholders.

### Confidentiality

We are committed to creating a psychologically safe environment where individuals feel able to speak up to the review.

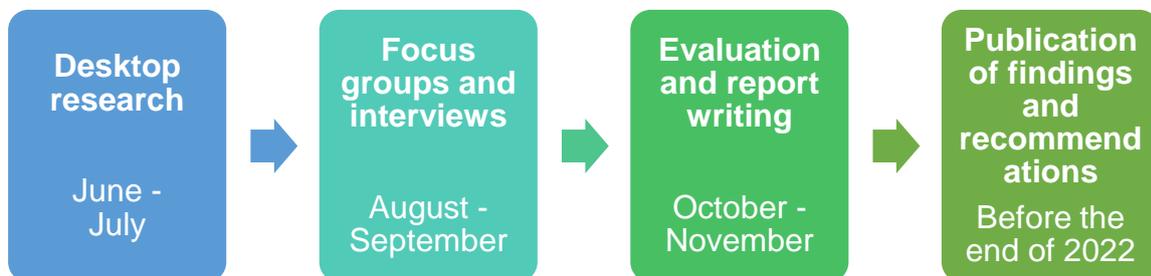
We will not disclose identifiable information shared by workers as part of this review with others, including individuals in the participating trusts, without the consent of those relevant workers.

In some circumstances where, for instance, there is an immediate risk of harm to an individual, we may need to take further action. In such cases, we will act while protecting confidentiality as much as possible. We will liaise with the individual in all cases where confidentiality may be affected.

### Timetable

We will carry out our review between June and September 2022.

We will publish our report and recommendations on our website after that.



**Figure 1.** High-level timeline for the NGO's speak-up review of NHS ambulance trusts

## Speak up review of ambulance trusts

### Information request

Please complete and return this table to us along with the data/documentation by 6 PM on **4 July 2022** to [REDACTED] [@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk).

#	Item requested	Provided (Y/N)	Please add any relevant background information	Please indicate if for any reason you cannot respond to a request, and where applicable, please indicate when a response will be provided
1	Action plans in response to your most recent CQC inspection			
2	Audits or reviews pertaining to freedom to speak up that have been carried out in the last three years			
3	Gap analysis of National Guardian's Office case review recommendations			
4	Speaking up training – your current offer, policy (e.g. whether mandatory and frequency of completion), and take-up figures			
5	Freedom to speak up policy and procedure			
6	Freedom to speak up strategy/plan, including any comms strategy/plan			
7	Board reports pertaining to freedom to speak up – specifically, those that are publicly unavailable (e.g. those			

	featured in private or development sessions			
8	Freedom to speak up self-assessment toolkit			

<b>Any other information</b>
<i>Please feel free to share any additional information.</i>

■ NGO review - email to ■■■■■ and ■■■■■



ambulancespeakingupreview

To ■■■■■@nhs.net'; ■■■■■@nhs.net'



Wed 22/06/2022 12:54

Dear ■■■■■ and ■■■■■,

I hope you are well.

My name is ■■■■■, I am the ■■■■■ at the [National Guardian's Office](#) (NGO).

The (NGO) leads, develops and supports Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and provides support and challenge to the healthcare system in England on speaking up.

We are carrying out a speak up review of NHS ambulance trusts to describe the speaking up culture, including critical enablers and barriers, to workers speaking up about anything that gets in the way of them doing a good job. We will also be reviewing the congruence between speaking up measures and perceptions of ambulance trust workers.

The terms of reference for the review are attached, and information about the review has just gone live on our [website](#).

We recognise that the Isle of Wight NHS Trust is unique as an integrated acute, community, mental health and ambulance health care provider. Nonetheless, we are keen to build a holistic understanding of speaking up culture in ambulance services, including examples of good and innovative practices. As such, we would be keen to discuss the Isle of Wight NHS Trust's involvement in the speak-up review, including answering any questions you may have about our review or the NGO more generally. It would be helpful to have a short call with you about the above in the next couple of weeks.

We would be grateful if you could let us have details of a suitable colleague at the trust to be our point of contact for this review. We would be happy to contact them to arrange the call or if you prefer we can liaise with your PA.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at ■■■■■ [@Nationalguardianoffice.org.uk](mailto:■■■■@Nationalguardianoffice.org.uk) in the meantime if you have any queries.

Kind regards,

■■■■

[redacted] [he/him]

National Lead – [redacted]

Contact details for the National Guardian's Office:

- 0191 249 4400 (10 am – 2 pm, Mon to Fri exc. public holidays)
- [enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk)

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Freedom to Speak Up

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