

Board of Directors' Meeting 12 September 2024

Agenda item	135/24		
Report Title	Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Report Q1 2024-25		
Executive Lead	Anna Milanec, Director of Governance		
Report Author	Helen Turner, FTSU Lead Guardian		
CQC Domain:	Link to Strategic Goal:		Link to BAF / risk:
Safe	Our patients and community		BAF 13,
Effective	Our people		
Caring	Our service delivery		Trust Risk Register id:
Responsive	Our governance	√	
Well Led	Our partners		
Consultation Communication	N/A		
Executive summary:	<p>The following report provides the FTSU update for Quarter 1 2024/25</p> <p>67 contacts were made to FTSU in Q1, which is a 34% on the previous quarter and a 35% increase on Q1 23/24.</p> <p>As per NGO guidance, in Quarter 1 we have also begun to record our data which asks us to record themes as 'an element of', so one concern can have multiple elements of the recording categories.</p> <p>Recording themes in this way has highlighted worker safety and wellbeing as our most recorded category.</p> <p>The report also contains more detail on the 33 open contacts from 21/22 and 22/23.</p>		
Recommendations for the Board:	The Board is asked to take assurance from the report.		
Appendices (In Supplementary Information Pack):	Appendix 1: Feedback Appendix 2: Action Plan		

1. Assessment of issues including themes and trends

In Quarter 1, SaTH received 67 contacts through the FTSU mechanism. This has increased by 34% from the previous quarter. Contacts versus concerns is contained in the table below.

Qtr. 1 April – June 24	
Number of Contacts	67
Number of Concerns	47

The previous 5 year's contacts are contained in the table below to enable quarter and year-on-year comparison.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Increase/Decrease	National Increase
2024/25	67	NA	NA	NA	67 (Q1)	NA	NA
2023/24	47	52	68	50	217	↓23%	↑27.6%
2022/23	72	73	76	59	282	↓23%	↑25%
2021/22	100	113	90	66	369	↑18%	0%
2020/21	41	82	103	78	302	↑208%	26%

Table 1: Contacts made to FTSU since reporting began

The NGO requires all Trusts to submit their data to the national portal following the close of a quarter and is submitted in the following categories. At SaTH we also record an additional category of policies, procedures and processes.

Please note: In Quarter 1 we have also begun to record our data, as per NGO guidance, which asks us to record it as 'an element of', so one concern can have multiple elements of the categories below.

Category	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
	23/24	23/24	23/24	24/25
Bullying and Harassment	4	5	4	6
Patient Safety	3	7	10	17
Worker Safety or Wellbeing	7	11	4	49
Attitudes and behaviours	19	27	13	36
Policies, Processes and Procedures	16	16	14	31
Unknown	3	2	5	3
Other	0	0	0	3
Anonymously	2	2	0	1
Detriment	0	0	4	1

Table 2: NGO reporting category themes

Concerns raised by profession

Professional Group	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Qtr1
	(23/24)	(23/24)	(23/24)	(24/25)
Nursing and midwifery registered	14	17	13	17
Administrative and clerical	11	26	12	12
Estates and ancillary	4	1	2	4
Additional Clinical Services	7	6	9	23
Medical and dental	5	6	1	2
Allied Health Professionals	7	5	7	6
Not known/Other	4	2	5	3
Healthcare scientists	0	3	1	0
Additional professional scientific and technical	0	2	0	0
Total	52	68	50	67

Table 3: Concerns raised, by professional groups

Analysis of themes and professional groups

In Quarter 1 due to the new way of recording, the category, 'worker safety and wellbeing' was the most recorded theme and high levels were reported by nursing and midwifery and additional clinical services staff, specifically HCAs.

At a more granular level the contacts were about:

- 19 x short staffing levels all from clinical areas.
- 18 x colleague relationships – disputes/managing difficult conversations
- 7 x car parking changes
- 3 x from outside the organisation
- 3 x unknown
- 2 x about Band 2 pay
- 15 x a mixture of various other issues

Concerns around staffing have not been seen at this level since 2020/21.

The most important is the rise in contacts by Additional Clinical Services, and the effects that changes to staffing are having on them, whether bank and agency changes, long term sickness or the recruitment freeze. In Q2 we are also continuing to see contacts regarding concerns over staffing levels.

Recording of Data

Discrimination

We have now begun to record 'does the concern contain elements of discrimination' under the 9 x protected characteristics. In Quarter 1, only 1 was recorded under disability.

Detriment

In Quarter 1 there was just one case that had an element of detriment reported, this case was related to the mandating of the COVID vaccine and how it conflicted with the nursing code of

conduct. Subsequently the colleague felt singled out for raising this.

Contacts Per Division

Divisions	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
MEC	14 (27%)	9 (13%)	19 (38%)	34 (51%)
SACC	15 (29%)	18 (26%)	10 (20%)	11 (16%)
Corporate	12 (23%)	23 (34%)	8 (16%)	12 (18%)
CSS	5 (10%)	8 (12%)	5 (10%)	6 (9%)
W&C	4 (8%)	8 (12%)	4 (8%)	2 (3%)
Unknown/Other	2 (4%)	2 (3%)	4 (8%)	2 (3%)
Total	52	68	50	67

Table 4: Contacts by Division shown by number and proportionally.

Over half of the contacts (34) this month have come from MEC with 16 colleagues raising staffing concerns.

Open/Closed Contacts

The FTSU team noted the unease shown by the Board during presentation of the last report, relating to the historical open concerns from 21/22 and 22/23. This has been broken down in the tables below, commentary.

2021/2022

	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
<u>Contacts</u>	21/22	21/22	21/22	21/22
Open	0	0	4	1
Closed	101	112	86	65

Nature of concern	Open Contacts 2021-22	
	Qtr3	Qtr4
Attitudes and behaviours	1	0
Policies Procedures and Processes	2	0
Worker Safety or Wellbeing	1	0
Bullying and Harassment	0	0
Patient Safety	0	0

2022/2023

	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
<u>Contacts</u>	22/23	22/23	22/23	22/23
Open	1	13	12	2
Closed	70	60	67	57

Nature of concern	Open Contacts 2022-23			
	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
Attitudes and behaviours	1	1	2	2
Policies Procedures and Processes	0	0	1	0
Worker Safety or Wellbeing	0	0	0	0
Bullying and Harassment	0	0	8	0
Patient Safety	1	12	1	0

At the time of the last review, 17th April 2024 there were 36 open contacts from 21/22 and 22/23 equating to 11 open cases. At 23rd August 2024 there are 32 open contacts equating to 7 open cases.

17 of these contacts are related to ED across site, and they have been kept open as solutions to the issues raised, form part of the ED transformation programme. Concerns raised are the culture of the departments; moral injury; disproportionate risk in the ED department; solutions to the overcrowding in both EDs; recruitment and retention in the department due to the overcrowding and risk.

8 of the contacts are related to a team reporting bullying and harassment, these have remained open for a significant length of time due to a poor management response, there is now a programme of work in place to address the concerns and FTSU will visit the team at the end of the process to gain feedback and close the concern.

2 separate concerns have been open for up to two years due to the stopping and starting of the review/investigations. Both have now been concluded but the next steps and feedback to the people involved are inconclusive.

2 contacts are related to culture in another area where there is a transformation programme. As culture/changes in areas where transformation programmes happen can take time, it is appropriate that the concern is kept open and in consultation with those who have raised it until tangible change is seen.

1 concern has been open for 21 months; this is due to the time it took to escalate; disagreement between colleagues as to who was essentially owning it; timescales producing the required information for auditors. At this point there is no timescale for closing.

1 concern again open for 22 months although work was done to improve the issue, the dissemination of the learning and improvement has stalled. There has been recent progress with the concern being led by another senior leader.

1 concern remains open about staffing levels on the neo-natal wards.

2023/2024

	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
Contacts	23/24	23/24	23/24	23/24
Open	0	2	10	11
Closed	47	50	58	39

There are 23 open contacts in 23/24 which equate to 21 open concerns. Since the last report in May 2024, open contacts have been reduced by 29.

2024/25

	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4
Contacts	24/25	24/25	24/25	24/25
Open	24	NA	NA	NA
Closed	43	NA	NA	NA

Days taken to close the concerns in Q1

The table below shows the breakdown in quarter 1 2024/25 of the length of time taken to close concerns

Length of time to close some concerns is always a cause for concern and further interrogation of why they are still open is needed.

Time taken to close concerns	
Number of weeks	Number of contacts
0-2	20
2-4	6
4-6	4
6-8	1
8-10	3
10-12	3
12-14	3
>14	27

Of the 27 >14 weeks 24 are still open.

Of the 24 contacts open over 14 weeks this equates to 13 separate cases

Breakdown of cases open:

- 13 x contacts are about staffing levels from clinical areas.
- 7 x cases colleague relationships
- 4 x cases a mix of issues

2.0 Action taken to improve FTSU Culture

1. Mandatory Training

In June 2022, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital were one of the first Trust's in the country to mandate FTSU online training. Compliance rates are encouraging and each quarter there is a steady increase. The FTSU team are working with the Education Team to increase compliance of all FTSU training modules to 90%.

At 16th July 2024 the compliance rate for all modules stands at:

	% Completion Q4 2023
FTSU – Core – Training for all Workers	91.11/% ↑ 1.65%
FTSU – Listen Up – Training for all Managers	80.94% ↑ 1.94%
FTSU – Follow Up – Training for Senior Leaders	65% ↑ 6%

FTSU is now part, as custom and practice, of various forums; inductions; leadership programmes; therefore the list which was routinely included will no longer appear in this report. Going forward the quarterly reports now include a comprehensive improvement action plan and all actions taken on improvement are recorded there.

National Picture

In Quarter 1 there was very little communication from the National Guardians Office due to purdah.

However, since the General Election a number of reports have been published including:

- New information film for NEDS and Trustees, which has been circulated to the Board
- NGO Annual Report
 - Highest ever recorded number of concerns, 27% increase on the previous year
 - 40% of the concerns are inappropriate attitudes and behaviours.
- FTSU updated strategy
- **Listening to the Silence – What the staff survey says about speaking up in the NHS:**
 - A five-year low in the number of respondents who feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice.
 - The confidence of medical professionals to raise clinical safety concerns has declined by around six percentage points since 2021 (69.4% in 2023 compared to 75.1% in 2021). This is declining for medics at all stages of their career (both those in training and consultants).
 - Overall sub-score has remained static.
 - **SaTH is also included as one of the Top 10 most improved Trusts in the country for their speaking up scores, as per annex below.**

Annex: Top 10 most improved NHS Trusts

Organisation	Benchmark group	Freedom to Speak Up sub-score 2023	Change from 2022 sub-score
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust	Ambulance	5.73	+0.43
Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust	Mental Health & Learning Disabilities and Mental Health, Learning Disabilities & Community	6.41	+0.33
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Ambulance	6.14	+0.30
The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.28	+0.25
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.36	+0.25
The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.07	+0.25
University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.30	+0.23
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.39	+0.23
Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.38	+0.23
North Bristol NHS Trust	Acute & Acute Community	6.60	+0.23

Key Performance Indicators at Q1

1. **Our Cultural Dashboard achieves a 3% increase year on year in all themes.**

In 23/24 the dashboard increased by 4.5% overall.

2. **Sickness absence rate is below 4%**

Up to June 2024 – 4.95%

3. **People turnover is below threshold of 14.1%**

Up to June 2024 – 10.89%

4. **Staff Survey response rate surpasses 45%**

In 23/24 the staff survey response rate achieved 45%, a 4% decrease on the year before, however

5. **Staff Survey key questions for FTSU 19a, 19b, 23e and 23f increase.**

All staff survey results received for 22/23 showed an increase.

4.0 SaTH Feedback

NGO guidance expects that all those who have raised concerns to the FTSUG and ambassadors are asked the following questions:

1. Given your experience would you speak up again to the FTSU Guardian?"
Yes/No/Maybe/Don't know
2. Please explain your response

Responses received up until the end of Quarter 1 2024/25 can be seen at Appendix 1.