

NORTHUMBERLAND, TYNE AND WEAR NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

Meeting Date: 24 June 2015

Title and Author of Paper: Freedom to Speak Update, Lisa Crichton-Jones, Executive Director of Workforce and OD.

Paper for Debate, Decision or Information: Information

Key Points to Note:

This paper reminds the Board of Directors of the Freedom to Speak up Report published in February 2015.

The Department of Health consultation with regards to the recommendations made by Sir Robert Francis has recently closed.

NHS Employers submitted a response to the consultation on behalf of employers and this is attached for information.

Since the publication of the report, work has continued within the Trust to support staff in raising concerns. This includes CDT agreeing to adopt the NHS Employers Draw the Line Resources and development of a new intranet based awareness package for all staff.

In addition, discussions have been held, involving the Chief Executive, with regards to a specific recommendation to appoint Freedom to Speak up Guardian role.

This paper updates the Board on the ongoing considerations as to Freedom to Speak up Guardians.

Outcome required:

The Board of Directors are asked to note;

- The NHS Employers response to the Department of Health consultation regarding the Freedom to Speak up report and the particular response with regard to the appointment of Guardians.
- Final arrangements for Guardians within NTW will not be made until the Department of Health has responded to the consultation in order that cognisance can be given to any national guidance.
- The work underway within the Trust to consider Freedom to Speak up Guardians.

Introduction

This paper reminds the Board of Directors of the Freedom to Speak up Report published in February 2015.

The Department of Health consultation with regards to the recommendations made has recently closed. NHS Employers submitted a response to the consultation on behalf of employers and this is attached for information.

Since the publication of the report, work has continued within the Trust to support staff in raising concerns. This includes CDT agreeing to adopt the NHS Employers Draw the Line Resources and development of a new intranet based awareness package for all staff.

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This paper updates the Board on the ongoing considerations as to Freedom to Speak up Guardians.

NHS Employers Response

NHS Employers published their response to the Department of Health consultation on 10th June 2015. This is attached for information. The Director of Workforce and OD attended an NHS Employers event in London in April which provided an opportunity to contribute to the response.

Section 2 of the response focuses on the Freedom to Speak up Guardian role. Members will read that this includes, amongst other points, consideration of the expected outcomes of such a post holder and if it is to be a separate role, how it is to be resourced.

The view is the Guardian should;

- Support individuals with concerns to raise them with confidence, in their organisation, in a timely and appropriate way, providing information and sign posting to support packages.
- Support managers in encouraging open conversations, receiving and dealing with concerns.
- Has the ability to challenge, be seen as impartial.
- Work as part of a team of individuals who are collectively working together to improve systems, processes and how cases are handled.
- Have a direct reporting arrangement in the employing organisation to the Chief Executive or equivalent.
- Ensure clarity of the link and relationship between the local guardian function and the INO.

Within the Trust, considerations have been and remain ongoing with regards to;

- Staff governors undertaking this role.
- The Equality and Diversity Advisor undertaking this role.
- Staff side representatives undertaking this role.
- A NED undertaking this role or supporting others to undertake this role.

A meeting is scheduled for 23rd June to further explore the potential for Staff Governors to undertake this role. Notwithstanding the national response to the recommendations, any individuals appointed into role will require specific training and support.

Conclusion

The Board of Directors are asked to note;

- The NHS Employers response to the Department of Health consultation regarding the Freedom to Speak Up Report and the particular response with regard to the appointment of Guardians
- Final arrangements for Guardians within NTW will not be made until the Department of Health has responded to the consultation in order that cognisance can be given to any national guidance.
- The work underway within the Trust to consider Freedom to Speak up Guardians

Lisa Crichton-Jones
Executive Director of Workforce and OD
24 June 2015