

Press release

22nd July 2021

National Guardian's Office publishes Strategic Framework for Freedom to Speak Up

[The Strategic Framework, published today \(22nd July\)](#), outlines the National Guardian's Office priorities for Freedom to Speak Up for the healthcare sector.

In the five years since the Freedom to Speak Up Review, much has been achieved. There is now a network of over 700 Freedom to Speak Up Guardians supporting workers in nearly 500 organisations.

The strategic direction of the National Guardian's Office is to build upon the improvements that Freedom to Speak Up has already made, ensuring that speaking up arrangements work consistently well. The freedom to speak up should be available to everyone in the healthcare system, irrespective of where they work.

Over the past five years, the work of the National Guardian's Office has shown that the promoters and barriers of speaking up are universal. Universal principles for creating a speak up, listen up, follow up culture – and implementing the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role – will promote consistency and support the development of a more integrated healthcare system.

This Strategic Framework also sets out the intention of the National Guardian's Office to obtain greater assurance about speaking up cultures and the quality and consistency of how the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is implemented.

Russell Parkinson, Head of Office and Strategy for the National Guardian's Office, said: *"This framework enables the National Guardian's Office to build on the achievements of Freedom to Speak Up to date and to respond to wider changes in the healthcare landscape. The 50,000+ cases that have been brought to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians have offered 50,000+ opportunities for learning and improvement. But despite this, the pandemic has highlighted how much more needs to be done.*

"The most immediate concern of the National Guardian's Office is ensuring that speaking up works well now so that our healthcare workforce feels empowered and listened to. Making speaking up business as usual will enhance the working life of the healthcare workforce and improve the quality and safety of care.

"This Strategic Framework will give the new National Guardian a framework to build upon, shape and lead."

This Strategic Framework has been developed with valuable contributions from colleagues in national bodies, leaders and workers' representatives – including from outside the healthcare sector – and Freedom to Speak Up Guardians. We are grateful for their input and guidance.

For more information or interviews contact: comms@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk

>ENDS<

Notes for editors:

About this report

The National Guardian Office's Freedom to Speak Up Strategic Framework

Published : 22nd July 2021

Available from: www.nationalguardian.org.uk

About the National Guardian's Office

The National Guardian's Office works to make speaking up become business as usual in health.

The office leads, trains and supports a network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in England and provides learning and challenge on speaking up matters to the healthcare system as a whole.

Since the establishment of the NHS National Guardian's Office in 2016 following the recommendation of the Francis Freedom to Speak Up Review there is now a wide-ranging network of over 700 Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in England supporting workers in nearly 500 organisations, in primary and secondary care, the independent sector and national bodies.

www.nationalguardian.org.uk

About the National Guardian for the NHS



Dr Henrietta Hughes OBE FRCGP was appointed as the National Guardian in July 2016. She provides leadership and support to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians across England in national bodies, NHS and independent sector organisations to ensure that speaking up becomes business as usual.

In June 2021, Dr Hughes announced she would be stepping down as National Guardian in September, after five years in the role.