

Press release

11th November 2021

New National Guardian for the NHS appointed

Clinical leader and registered nurse, Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, has been appointed as the new National Guardian for Freedom to Speak Up in the NHS in England.

Dr Chidgey-Clark has more than 30 years' experience in the NHS, higher education, voluntary and private sectors. Her most recent roles include as non-executive director at NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) where she was a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

The role of the National Guardian was established in 2016 following the Freedom to Speak Up Review to help lead a cultural change within the NHS.

The National Guardian's Office leads, trains and supports the network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in England and provides challenge and learning to the healthcare system on matters related to speaking up.

There are now over 700 Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in almost 500 NHS primary and secondary care, independent sector organisations and national bodies. Freedom to Speak Up Guardians support workers in their organisations who wish to speak up, ensuring that they are thanked, that the issues they raise are responded to, and that they receive feedback on the actions taken as a result.

Ian Trenholm, Chief Executive of the Care Quality Commission said: *"I am delighted that Jayne has accepted the position of National Guardian. She has extensive experience of working in the NHS and is passionate about improving the experiences of people using services.*

"The National Guardian has a vital role in encouraging and supporting people to speak up freely and safely about anything which gets in the way of providing great care. I am confident that Jayne will continue to build on the progress made over the last five years to foster a culture of openness within the healthcare system as she leads and supports a growing network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians."

Sir Andrew Morris OBE Hon FRCP, Interim Chair of NHS Improvement said: *"I welcome Jayne's appointment to the National Guardian's Office where her skills and experience will be invaluable in further developing the work of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians. On behalf of NHSE/I, we are looking forward to working in partnership with Jayne."*

Sir Robert Francis QC said: *“I am thrilled that Jayne has been appointed as the new National Guardian, a role which is so vital to the continuing transformation of NHS culture to one of support for patients and staff with candour, openness and transparency. I am sure she will ably continue the progress made since the National Guardian’s Office was set up and I look forward to supporting her as she leads the development of the Freedom to Speak Up agenda.*

Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, incoming National Guardian said: *“I feel excited and privileged to have been appointed as the new National Guardian for the NHS. I am passionate about, and committed to, making a real difference in people’s lives through the planning and delivery of the highest quality, effective care with excellent outcomes for people who use our health services, and their families.*

“An effective Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS is key to this and I am proud to continue the excellent foundation that Dr Henrietta Hughes, the National Guardian’s Office and the 700+ Freedom to Speak Up Guardians across the country have laid.”

Dr Chidgey-Clark’s selection for appointment was made by a panel consisting of representatives from CQC, NHS England and NHS Improvement, as co-sponsors for the National Guardian’s Office. The panel also included Sir Robert Francis QC, whose Freedom to Speak Up Review instigated the creation of the National Guardian role.

Dr Chidgey-Clark is expected to take up the role on 1st December.

For more information please contact:

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Notes for editors:

About the National Guardian's Office

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

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 almost 500 organisations, in primary and secondary care, the independent sector and national bodies.

Over 50,000 cases have been raised to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians since they were established. The speaking up culture in the NHS has [moved in a positive direction](#), and is now firmly embedded in the Standard NHS Contract and the Well Led inspection by Care Quality Commission. In association with Health Education England the National Guardian's Office has launched [Freedom to Speak Up](#) training for all workers, Listen Up training for all managers and Follow Up training for all senior leaders is in development.

www.nationalguardian.org.uk

Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark



Dr Chidgey-Clark has more than 30 years' experience in the NHS, higher education, voluntary and private sectors. Most recently she was a non-executive director at NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) where she was a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

She is the Independent Chair for the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board. She also worked with the NHS England New Care Models Programme for three years as a Clinical Associate and has been working as a consultant and coach with and in the NHS since March 2015. Her specialist clinical area is end of life care in which she was awarded her PhD.