

# 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.

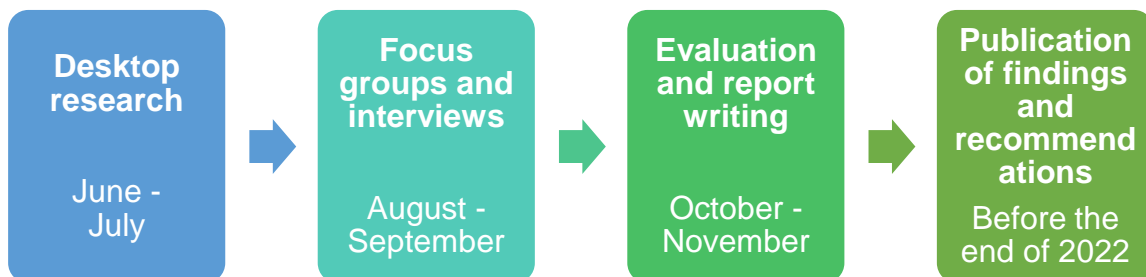
We will not disclose identifiable information shared by workers as part of this review with others, including individuals in the participating trusts, without the consent of those relevant workers.

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