



Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Development Guide

March 2023

Introduction

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is complex and challenging, requiring the highest standards of ethical leadership, partnership working, courage and integrity.

One of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian core values, as set out in the universal job description, is learning. This is because guardians seek continuous improvement, not just for their organisations, but for themselves. Working in an ever changing, complex environment such as healthcare, in a role in which no two days are ever the same, guardians take their development seriously in order to maintain the high standards the role requires of them.

We want all Freedom to Speak Up Guardians to feel confident in their role. We have updated this Development Guide to meet the needs of the growing network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians who work in an increasingly diverse range of settings. The focus of this refreshed guide is guardians' personal growth and development of skills, including updated resources and information on inclusivity and psychological safety.

In order to help you build upon your existing skills and experience, we have included an online self-assessment tool, to be used in conjunction with this Development Guide. This will support you in identifying your ongoing learning and areas for development and we hope you will take any opportunities, to share your knowledge with other Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in your organisation, region or network.

Thank you to everyone who has helped in the refresh of this guide, and in particular the Guardians who contributed their views as part of the focus groups. We would welcome your feedback on this refreshed version so we can continue to improve this resource in the future.

By committing to your development as a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, this in turn will benefit your organisation in improving its speak up culture as we work towards making speaking up business as usual.

I hope this guide is helpful in your ongoing work and thank you for all you do in your complex and challenging role.

Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark,
National Guardian for the NHS

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Background to the Guide

This Development Guide complements the Foundation and Refresher training and is a resource for every Guardian's self-development, whatever their experience in the role.

Whilst the principle aim of the Guide is to support Guardians' reflective practice and self-development, it could also be useful for:

- Regional and National Networks who might like to use the resources to support a local conversation about aspects of good practice
- Early conversations with Guardian Mentors and peer-to-peer support
- Induction and other training programmes, for which the Guide provides easily accessible materials to use and download
- Organisations keen to support their Guardians by understanding the nature and complexity of the role
- Informing Guardians' organisational appraisals and personal development plans

The Guide offers a short perspective on each of the twenty-one elements of the eight competencies alongside questions for reflection and links to supportive material which will be regularly refreshed.

However you use the Guide, we hope you find it useful, informative and enjoyable.

Self-Development Aims

Following appointment to the role of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, and within 1 month of appointment, you are required to have completed Foundation Training, known as Part 1 and within 3 months, had a Reflective Conversation, known as Part 2. You will then be considered a fully trained Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

Annually, you will be required to complete Refresher training to support your ongoing development.

We want you to use this guide as a working document and one you can refer to and measure your development journey.

There will be the opportunity to use the self-development tool on completion of this guide, which will help you to ascertain your current Guardian level. You can access this tool using the link on page 48 of this guide. There are four levels, and as a guide, you would be expected to be at level one across all domains in the first 3 months, progressing to level two across all domains by the end of the first year. If you self-assess as Level Four in any of the domains, please contact your Network Chair and offer your expertise to the group.

The Development Guide can also be included in your personal development plans, appraisals, and preparation for professional revalidation if applicable to another role you hold.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on this guide and would value suggestions for improvement and other information that you think it could usefully include.

Feedback should be provided to: enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk

Using the Guide

After an initial reflection on the success, importance and ongoing challenge of Freedom to Speak Up, the Guide introduces the Guardian Competencies and Self-Development Framework. The Self-Development framework on pages 8 to 13 is designed to enable you to review your overall and specific role confidence and capability against the competencies required for effective performance of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian job description, helping you to identify your distinctive strengths and current development interests.

In the remainder of the Guide you will then find content on each of the twenty-one dimensions of the eight core competencies with questions for (preferably written) reflection and links to associated resources for use in your ongoing self-development. Many of the materials can also be downloaded for use in training sessions.

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will be asked to engage with this Development Guide. This engagement can take various forms, depending on experience. New Guardians may like to work through the Guide from start to finish – and it is worth all Guardians doing this at least every few years as a comprehensive stock take. Others may prefer to focus in on a few or even a single competency.

The Guide recognises that Guardians come to the role with diverse backgrounds and a rich variety of experience to use and share and so offers a range of resources for wide appeal. Given the breadth of the competencies that the role involves, do not be surprised if you see yourself having particular strengths in some areas and less so in others.

It is also true that the demands of your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role will vary according to the kind and size of organisation you work within, particularly affecting the number/frequency/complexity of cases. Escalation and confidentiality are impacted differently by organisational size and structure – with intimacy presenting particular challenges in smaller organisations as much as hierarchy and power in larger organisations. Where you work will therefore influence the relevance and importance of the competencies.

While the Guide concentrates on competency development, it also recognises that the role both requires and develops an individual's personal qualities and practical abilities. For example, a Guardian is expected to be impartial (a personal quality) whilst being able to evaluate various sources of information and feedback (a practical skill). This illustrates the level of self-awareness and self-management required of those in the role. Self-development is about developing yourself both personally and professionally.



Illustration 1: Guardian qualities and domains

Another way of using this resource is to concentrate on the sections that develop particular elements of the Job Description. If this is the approach you would like to take, the diagram below shows the relationship between the eight competency headings and eight elements of the job description. For example, if you would like to strengthen your impact on ensuring senior leaders role model effective speaking up then you would concentrate on developing your competencies in communication, measuring effectiveness and impact, training and capability building and working with senior leaders:

		Competency							
		Communication	Partnership building and relationship managing	Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems	Driving continuous improvement	Time management and prioritisation	Measuring effectiveness and impact	Training and capability building	Working with senior leaders
Job	Workers throughout the organisation have the capability, knowledge and skills they need to speak up for themselves and to support others to speak up	*	*					*	*
	Speaking up processes are effective and constantly improved			*	*		*		
	Senior leaders role model effective speaking up	*					*	*	*
	All workers are encouraged to speak up	*				*		*	
	Individuals are supported when they speak up	*	*					*	*
	Barriers to speaking up are identified and tackled		*	*	*		*		
	Information provided by speaking up is used to learn and improve		*	*	*		*		*
	Freedom to speak up is consistent throughout the health and care system and is ever improving	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

The importance of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Role

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are an ever-growing community working in an increasingly diverse range of organisations in England, including primary and secondary care, the independent sector and national bodies. All work with their organisation's leadership and alongside existing systems, enabling and empowering colleagues to speak up about anything which they think affects the quality of patient care or staff experience and to tackle barriers to speaking up where they are found.

Why is it so difficult to speak up?

The answer, of course, lies in our emotional and psychological disposition compounded by power and powerlessness. Most of us are at least momentarily defensive when we are told things we don't want to hear, a minority view is frequently difficult to offer for fear of exclusion, and we tend to see what we want to see. Or we are simply unsure that we are right, particularly if others do not share our view. Sometimes, we see our colleagues struggling with an already demanding workload, and do not want to add to that by triggering a chain reaction of events, particularly when speaking up to power could cause negative consequences. On occasion, the issues might involve a friend. Frequently, it's easier to simply say nothing.

Which is precisely why speaking up and enabling others to do so requires the compassion, skill and courage that we hope this Guide will help you build.

Questions for reflection

1. Why does being a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian matter to you?
2. How do you describe the role to friends and colleagues?
3. What do you find most rewarding about the role?
4. What do you find most challenging about the role?
5. How do you know when you're being effective in the role?

Useful resources:

1. PDF of the presentation on '[Beyond Silence](#)' from the Kings Fund Point of Care Programme in 2013
2. Gutkind, L. (2007) *Silence Kills: Speaking Out and Saving Lives* Medical Humanities, London
3. Maxfield, D., Pound, R., (2013) *Silence Kills UK: How Speaking Up Saves Lives in UK Healthcare Organisations*
4. Video: Margaret Heffernan (2013), [The dangers of wilful blindness](#), Courtesy TED.com recorded at TEDxDanubia Sound 2018, under CC licence BY-NC-ND 3.0
5. Video: Margaret Heffernan (2012), [Dare to disagree](#), Courtesy TED.com recorded at TEDGlobal Sound 2012, under CC licence BY-NC-ND 3.0
6. Reitz, M (2017) [How Your Power Silences Truth](#), Courtesy TED.com recorded at TEDxAshridgeHult Sound 2017, under CC licence BY-NC-ND 3.0
7. Example Job Description produced by the National Guardian's Office, page 61.
8. "Speaking Truth to Power: why leaders cannot hear what they need to hear", Megan Reitz, BMJLeader, 2021 M Reitz BMJ Article

Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Competency and Self-Development Framework

Background

This Framework is designed to help Freedom to Speak Up Guardians reflect on and develop their competence to carry out the role to the best of their ability. It is designed to help Guardians recognise their skills and strengths and to identify, plan and acknowledge their development. Because of its specificity, it could usefully inform conversations with line managers and leaders about the realities and responsibilities of Freedom to Speak Up Guardian work. It may also help inform discussions on wider training priorities and identify local - and regional - subject matter experts who will be able to help support wider development across the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian network, and health and care system more widely.

Frequency

We would encourage Freedom to Speak Up Guardians to review their competencies every 6 – 12 months.

Guidance

The table on pages 9 to 13 includes a summary of the key competencies for those in the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role. In reading each competency definition, Guardians are encouraged to reflect on their experience and effectiveness, identifying strengths and scope for growth in each area on a scale of 1 to 4, described below.

Competency Level	Description
Level One	I am aware of the competency area though without the knowledge, capability and experience to fully demonstrate it.
Level Two	I have a good working understanding of the competency area, but with some knowledge and/or capability and/or experience gaps, so look to others experience and support on a regular and consistent basis. I am not yet able to confidently give peer support and guidance to other Guardians.
Level Three	I work with a secure understanding and knowledge of this competency. Though I still look for confirmation, advice and guidance, I am beginning to train or coach or mentor others who are at levels 1 and 2. I am aware of the skills and knowledge that I need to keep refreshed, those that I need to practice more, and the further experience, mentoring, coaching or training I need within this competency to reach the highest level.
Level Four	I am capable and confident with advanced knowledge, expertly demonstrating the principles, processes, behaviours and skills necessary for this competency. I am aware of the skills and knowledge that needs to be refreshed to maintain this level and am able to support others in reaching a greater understanding and knowledge of the competency. I train or coach or mentor others in this competence area.

We would not expect any one person to be at Level Four for every competency, the initial aim being for each Freedom to Speak Up Guardian to achieve Level 2 over the first year of their role. We also recognise that the importance and relevance of each competency will vary according to the size/complexity of your organisation and the time you are able to devote to the role. Also, where there are multiple Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in an organisation, then subject matter expertise can be helpfully spread across the group. It is for these reasons that every Guardian's Development Plan will be unique.

If you are at Level Four in any of the competencies: Please let the National Guardian's Office know so that we can look at ways to share your knowledge and skills further. Consider helping and supporting others to develop and share your experience across your regional or national network by becoming a Network Chair, Guardian Mentor or training lead.

Self-Development Tool

Competency	Typical Skills	L1	L2	L3	L4	Strengths and development interests	Page Number
Communication							
Development and delivery of communication and engagement programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working with communication specialists to refine and disseminate messages • Development of resources to deliver and refresh messages • Presentation skills and ability to adapt style and approach depending on audience • Presenting using diverse media 						14
Sensitive and supportive engagement with individuals, particularly those who find it difficult to speak up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible and accessible to all colleagues • One to one communication skills and ability to listen, respond and question appropriately • Coaching and counselling • Able to anticipate change and understand personal impact on individuals • Mediation • Understanding of open/ confidential/ anonymous approaches and how to manage them 						16

Partnership building and relationship management							
Knowledge of responsibilities related to safety, quality and governance that teams and partners within and outwith the organisation hold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working and networking skills 						19
Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems							
Knowledge of local speaking up processes and sources of support and guidance, including escalation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate and effective triaging of issues Understanding of the organisation's policies and procedures to support staff speaking up Understanding of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 Understanding of responsibilities for fraud reporting (NHS counter fraud authority) 						21
Knowledge of wider Freedom to Speak Up developments, best practice, and direction from National Guardian Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining knowledge of current good practice policy and guidance on speaking up 						21
Knowledge of processes to escalate potential patient safety and quality issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the range of professional duties for all registered staff groups 						21
Knowledge of wider policy initiatives, and sources of additional support from other organisations, as well as those within individual organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping abreast of developments Knowledge of the roles that other organisations play 						21

Driving continuous improvement							
Review and improvement of Freedom to Speak Up guidance and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to define strategic problems and choices and develop strategic action plans and policy development • Ability to invite feedback and ideas to drive improvement 						22
Development of strategies and action plans to improve Freedom to Speak Up culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of some strategic analysis frameworks/ approaches and models (e.g. SWOT, PESTEL, Pugh matrix, Pareto) 						28
Awareness of, and reflection on, own skills and abilities and training needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection and awareness • Knowledge of training and development options and opportunities • Commitment to learning improvement and personal development 						30
Measuring effectiveness and impact							
Development of measures/ indicators of local Freedom to Speak Up culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and identification of trends from complex data 						32
Assessment of the effectiveness of Freedom to Speak Up processes and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident analysis and evaluation of various sources of evidence and feedback to support conclusions 						32

Demonstration of the impact that speaking up is having	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and evaluation of information to evidence impact of actions and plans 						32
Ensuring information and data are handled appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and information management skills Understanding and interpreting data, comfortable using quantitative and qualitative information Maintaining confidentiality Understanding of data protection legislation 						32
Time management and prioritisation							
Development and support of a Freedom to Speak Up stakeholder network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management skills Leadership skills Ability to identify key staff groups internal and external to trust Mentoring skills 						35
Ability to manage/oversee multiple cases and own priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case management Supervision 						36
Training and capability building							
Assessment of the knowledge and capability of staff to speak up and to support others when they speak up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with HR specialists to assess staff capability Knowledge of and access to appropriate training and skill raising activities 						39

Taking action to ensure that all staff have the skills and knowledge they need to enable them to speak up effectively, and to support others to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with HR and communications specialists to develop staff capability and raise awareness of good practice Working with staff side/ Union representatives to promote good practice Working with staff and diversity networks 						41
Working with senior leaders							
Development of strong and open working relationships with senior leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship building Communication skills Demonstrable independence Understanding of senior leaders' obligations and responsibilities in a Freedom to Speak Up context 						42
Production and presentation of reports to help senior leaders understand Freedom to Speak Up culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report writing and understanding of effective communication methods Presentation skills, adopting the right approach and medium for the audience Strategy development 						44
Holding senior leaders to account, challenging them, and supporting them in improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship building Communication skills Resilience Using influence effectively 						46

Communication: Development and delivery of communication and engagement programmes

Some thinking about this competency

A good place to start as you think about preparing a communication and engagement programme is to think about communications that have really engaged you – and those that haven't:

Questions for reflection

1. What's the difference in these for you?
2. What can you learn from this comparison to build into your programmes?

A distinction that may become immediately clear is that communication is the foundation of engagement but that they are not the same thing. Online dictionary definitions make this point well. Communication is described as “the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium” whilst engagement is “the emotional commitment”; the difference between what you say and its impact.

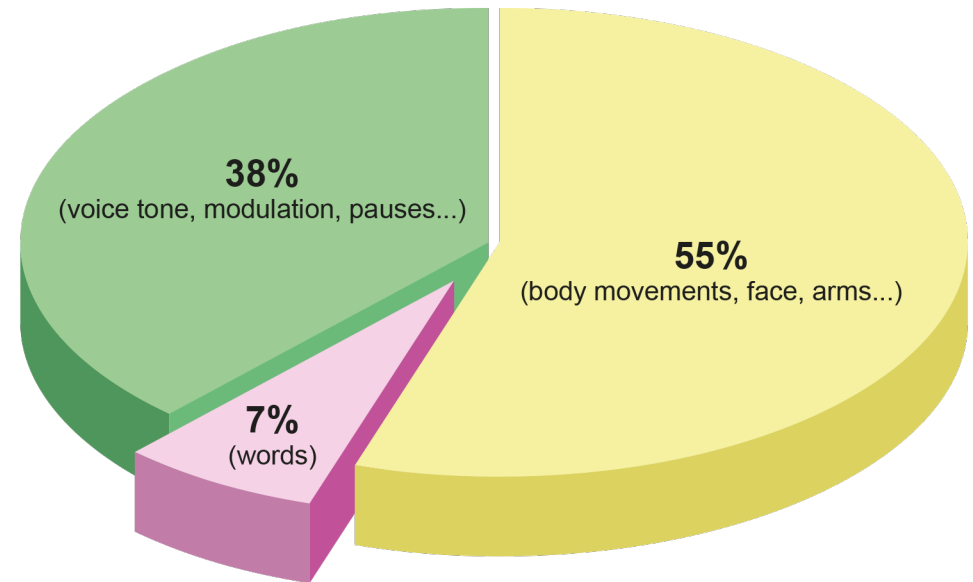
What, then, do you need to do to create an engaging communication?

Carmine Gallo's book 'Talk Like Ted' (2014) thoroughly researched this question to explain why some talks are so popular. His research found that it wasn't so much the content, nor the credibility of the speaker but that both these were ignited by the authenticity of the speaker's passion. In other words, to generate engagement in your communication, you first need to demonstrate it yourself. Following his guidance:

Questions for reflection

1. How much of your own experience do you include in your presentations?
2. How enthusiastic are you during presentations?
3. Is creating the tone of the presentation part of your preparation?

This last question particularly relates to Mehrabian's (1971) important research which showed that we make sense of ambiguous messages mostly through non-verbal communication. The surprise in this is that how we look and sound seems to be more important than what we actually say:



Exactly how and how much each person is going to understand through content, body language and tone is, essentially, one of the differences that we need to adapt our style to respond to. Linking this to the well-known Myers Briggs Profile, a more 'sensing' audience is likely to engage with the detailed, practical data-rich 7%, whereas an 'intuitive' audience may be more interested in the brief, visionary, big idea.

As well as thinking about the style and tone of your communications, you will also need to think about how often you refresh your campaign to maintain awareness, particularly for groups of staff with high turn-over.

Questions for reflection

1. How do you adapt your presentation style to your audience's personality preferences?
2. How do you ensure that your communications engage each personality style?
3. How do you ensure that your Freedom to Speak Up communications engage all staff groups, especially those with high turn-over or occasional hours?

Useful resources:

1. Mehrabian, Albert (1971). *Silent Messages* (1st ed.). Wadsworth, Belmont C.A..
2. Gallo, C. (2014) *Talk Like Ted*. St. Martin's Press, London.
3. Video: [Carmine Gallo \(2014\), Talk Like Ted](#). Courtesy Talks At Google, Carmine Gallo: "Talk Like TED" | Talks at Google - YouTube
4. Video: Caroline Goyder (2014) [The surprising secret to speaking with confidence](#). Courtesy TED.com recorded at TEDxBrixton Sound 2012, under CC licence BY-NC-ND 3.0.

Communication: Sensitive and supportive engagement with individuals, particularly those who find it difficult to speak up

Some thinking about this competency

Providing sensitive and supportive engagement, particularly for those who find it difficult to speak up, can make the difference between colleagues speaking up and not. As you discussed during the Foundation training, colleagues do have a choice – to speak up to you, to speak out to others inside and outside the organisation or to remain silent. As speaking up can be hard and often stressful, the first thing to think about is whether people see you as holding confidences well. Most workplace environments are full of relationship networks and it's often impossible to anticipate who knows what and who and will speak to whom. Which means that you need to think about:

Questions for reflection

1. How well known are you? Colleagues are much more likely to seek you out if they know you or of you. To what extent have you thought about your visibility to staff mentioned during the Foundation Training (vulnerable groups, new starters, isolated workers, out of hours workers, off site workers)? Have you become part of the organisation's Induction training?
2. Where do you meet colleagues? How comfortable is this place for colleagues to access? Will colleagues be seen as they approach the meeting place and might this be in any way awkward? Will they be overseen when they are with you so that others will interpret what the conversation is about? Do you have off site meeting venues you can use? How do you create the conditions for an open and supportive conversation when you're working remotely?
3. How clearly do you check what your colleague wants from the conversation? It is easy to assume that they want to take some kind of action – or want you to take some kind of action on their behalf when they may simply want to vent.
4. How do you manage anonymous contacts by telephone, in writing, by other methods of communication?

(cont.)

5. At what point do you discuss confidentiality and what do you mean by this?
6. How do you make use of online meeting technologies to encourage colleagues to feel safe and speak up?

Anonymity and confidentiality are different and it is important not to confuse the two. Anonymity in basic terms means that someone is unwilling to reveal their identity and confidentiality means that someone is willing to reveal their identity to you but not to others. It is always helpful to manage expectations about confidentiality. For example, if someone comes to you after having spoken up about an issue to others within or outside the organisation, then it is likely that their identity will be revealed or already known. There may be occasions where confidentiality can be assured but only to a certain point, for example, where the matter becomes subject to legal proceedings when the identity of the person speaking might be required. It is always helpful to assure the individual that this will be discussed with them in advance, for example and how it will be managed.

The safer the space and greater experience of psychological safety you can create, the more likely your colleague is to speak up. Beyond place and confidentiality, the quality of your listening is critical. The recent rise of interest in mindfulness suggests that this apparently simple act of acceptance and receptivity is misleadingly difficult; our attention wanders, we start thinking about what we're going to say next and wondering how to make sure we can conclude this conversation to be at our next meeting on time.

Questions for reflection

1. When did you last feel really listened to? What did the other person do and not do that made you feel this? What can you learn from this?
2. How can you create psychological safety online?
3. How confident am I in my ability to enable colleagues to fully express their emotions before moving to the right action?

In future conversations, you might like to have Whitworth et al's (1998), framework in mind to reflect on the quality of your own listening. They describe three different levels of listening that are now widely used in the field of coaching:

Level 1

I am thinking about myself. I am preoccupied with what I want, what I am feeling and what I might want to say. In my communicating I am worrying about whether I am asking good questions, what I should ask next, whether I am being helpful and how well I am doing. Indicators include giving advice, talking about myself, feeling anxious or irritated, attending to my own agenda.

Level 2

I am concentrating on the other person. I am interested and intrigued. I am aware of my own judgements and able to put them to one side. My body language is mirroring theirs. I am able to summarise exactly what they have been saying. I am focused on them, following their agenda with my questions and responses. This is active listening.

Level 3

I am 'super aware'. I am fully attuned to the other person and aware of my own feelings, judgements and responses as well as other noises or goings on in the immediate environment. I hear the music behind the words. I notice changes in body movement, voice and energy. I am using my intuition and instincts. I am using the here and now and can help the other person learn from it. The dancer and the dance are one. This is the empathic state; I am using my emotional memory and physical recall to connect to their present emotional state. I am aware I am separate from them, not over-identified with them. I do not lose sight of my own shoes whilst walking momentarily in theirs. Level 3 listening can be transformational. We've probably all been in conversations when everything has fallen into place and yet the other person doesn't appear to have done anything; except, of course, they have – they've listened really well.

Questions for reflection

1. Typically, what's your current level of listening? How can you maintain or move it to the next level, especially when you're busy?

Alongside listening we offer sensitive and supportive engagement through questions that enable our colleagues to see issues more clearly and so feel better understood. As Einstein said, "most teachers waste their time by asking questions that are intended to discover what a pupil does not know, whereas the true art of questioning is to discover what the pupil does know or is capable of knowing". For this to be the case, our questions need to be kind rather than judgmental and genuinely curious. Typically, this means that the most helpful questions are both open ('how did you' rather than 'did you') and appreciative ('what's possible' rather than 'why didn't you'). This use of questions to build confidence and focus on possibilities is especially characteristic of coaching, for which you might use the following list of questions (2) and in this order:

- What's the issue?
- What makes it an issue now?
- Who owns this issue/problem?
- How important is it on a 1-10 scale?
- How much energy do you have for a solution on a 1-10 scale?
- What have you already tried?
- In an ideal world what would be happening around this issue? How would you know it had been resolved?
- What standing in the way of that ideal outcome?
- What's going RIGHT here – even if it's only a bit?
- Imagine you're at your most resourceful, what do you say to yourself about this issue?
- What are the options for action here?
- What criteria will you use to judge the options?
- Which option seems the best one against those criteria?
- So what's the next/first step?
- When will you take it?

You will notice that this is a great set of questions to develop both the insight and action that is typical of coaching. Often this moving on is only possible once your colleague has been able to express their feelings and gain the acknowledgement and acceptance that comes through reactions and questions that are more closely associated with counselling, such as:

- What is the issue from your perspective?
- How does this typically make you feel?
- What needs to happen for you to do something about this situation?

Questions for reflection

1. To what extent are my questions designed to help me or my colleague?
2. How helpful do I feel I'm being when I'm asking questions?
3. How appropriately am I using open and coaching questions?
4. How can I improve the questions I ask?

Useful resources:

1. Whitworth L, Kimsey-House H & Sandahl P (1998) *Co-Active Coaching* Palo Alto CA: Davies Black Publishing
2. *GROW Model Questions: 60 Questions To Enable Employee Growth*
3. Vogt, E., Brown, J., Isaacs, D. (2003) *The Art of Powerful Questions*
4. Coaching resources from the [NHS NE Leadership Academy website](#)
5. Video: Amy Edmonson, *Why Is Psychological Safety so Important in Health Care?* - YouTube
6. NHS Horizons – *A practical guide to the art of psychological safety in the real world of health and care*
7. *Article by Matthew Lieberman of UCLA on the importance of putting feelings into words* *The importance of emotional expression*

Partnership building and relationship management: Knowledge of responsibilities that teams and partners within and outwith your organisation hold

Some thinking about this competency

The nature and responsibility of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role mean that you won't be fully effective if you try to do everything yourself. Real culture change requires engagement and commitment from numerous individuals so your ability to work with and through colleagues rather than to beaver away on your own is a solid starting point.

Questions for reflection

1. What is your assessment of your capacity to undertake the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role?
2. How likely are you to see asking colleagues for support as a strength or a weakness?
3. How wide is your existing network?

There are two fundamental aspects to this competency; knowing who, and knowing how, to network. So, let's start with considering who holds responsibilities for safety and quality within and outside your organisation.

Questions for reflection

1. Please make a quick list of these people and their responsibilities to compare with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian colleague's list.
2. How strong is your relationship with these colleagues?
3. How could you strengthen your network with these people?

A useful approach to assessing the strength of your network is to take a piece of paper and then to:

Put yourself in the middle of the paper

Make a note of everyone you need in your network to undertake your role

Write each person's name on your paper, placing them at a distance to you to indicate how important your relationship with them is (so, names closest to you matter most, furthest away matter least) and writing their name in red, blue or green to indicate the current quality of your relationship.

In an instant, you will see who you need to strengthen your relationship with (the red names closest to you) and also who can help you to do so (the green and blue names).

During the Foundation Training, you discussed the partnerships you need to cultivate to do your job well. These included:

Inside your organisation:

- HR/business partners
- OD
- PALS
- Complaints teams
- Health and Well Being Boards
- EDI leads and networks
- Communications
- Incident reporting team
- Patient quality/safety teams
- Managers
- Board
- Chief Executive
- Chair
- Freedom to Speak Up Champions
- NEDs

- Staff governors
- Unions/staff side reps
- Occupational health
- Counter-fraud teams
- Wellbeing Champions
- Guardian of safe working hours

Outside your organisation:

- Regional/national networks
- National Guardian's Office
- Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in other organisations
- CQC
- NHS England
- ICS
- ICB

Questions for reflection

1. To what extent are all these colleagues now in your network?

Of course, you will only invest time in networking if you consider it to be worthwhile. Despite – or maybe because of social media – many of us still think there may be something a bit distasteful about networking, especially if we associate it with promoting our personal image.

Questions for reflection

1. What is your attitude to networking?

This is where we may need to think again. A true network is one in which colleagues offer one another mutual support, characterised by a cycle of give and take. Thinking about it like this means that you can offer as much to those in your network as you stand to receive. For example, being always mindful of confidentiality, you will be a rich source of data that others will wish to tap into to identify areas of concern/improvement. In addition, you might like to read resource 2, below, which suggests that 90% of our success comes from who knows about our work rather than from our work itself. Resource 1 offers ideas on how to improve your networking.

If you feel awkward about networking then try the following ideas to make a start:

1. Try setting yourself up on a social media networking site, such as LinkedIn or Twitter
2. Contact colleagues who are likely to be working on the kind of projects that you are to compare notes
3. Take the time to compliment a colleague on some good work they're involved in and ask if you can meet them to discuss their approach.

As a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian you not only need to network but also to consider building a network of support and influence. This will require you to actively identify potential departments, existing networks to interest and engage them, to invite, inform, inspire and involve them. Your network

of Freedom to Speak Up influencers are not only critical to ensuring that everyone has access to someone from outside their line-management chain who can advise and support them but also to your succession planning.

It's very likely that your working relationship with some members of your network and many of your colleagues will be closer to partnership working than to networking.

Questions for reflection

1. What is your understanding of the difference between networking and partnership working?
2. Who do you currently work in partnership with?

While it is very likely that a sound network is a good foundation for future partnership working, the latter requires more of a clear, shared goal, mutual trust and clear working arrangements, the essentials of system leadership and of the increasingly influential Provider Collaboratives (if you're keen to understand more about system leadership then please see the resource at 4, below). Working in partnership means doing things together, relying on each other and being reliable and dependable.

Questions for reflection

1. Who do you now need to work in partnership with?

Useful resources:

1. [Advice on networking from Southampton University](#) (related to career development but applies more broadly)
2. [Harvey Coleman's work on Performance, Image and Exposure.](#)
3. [Advice on effective partnership working from the Knowledge Biz.](#)
4. NHS Leadership Academy's online [System Leadership Programme](#)

Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems: Awareness of current practice, shared learning and developments from NGO

Some thinking about this competency

You'll probably have noticed that working as an effective Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is more about how you build relationships, create trust and challenge with courage than about being an expert in, for example, employment law. However, being confident about your understanding of key facts and policies is important. Colleagues will look to you for calm guidance and you may even find that you're usually more assertive when you're sure of your ground. With that in mind, the following table offers useful links and sources of important information.

Questions for reflection

1. What do you think matters most for you to know well as a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian?
2. Who can you rely on to help you understand the things that you're less confident about?
3. How does not thinking that you know enough affect your confidence and contribution to a conversation?
4. To what extent do you view your intuition and prior experience to be a form of knowledge to draw on?
5. How do you assess the immediacy by which you might need to take action?
6. Are you confident that you know who to contact in the event of an issue affecting patient safety for example that requires immediate action?
7. Are you linked in with your region and who to approach for advice and 'buddying' support?

Competency	Skills	Resources
Knowledge of local speaking up processes and sources of support and guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate and effective triaging of issues • Understanding of the policies and procedures to support staff speaking up • Understanding of the differences between open, confidential and anonymous and how to manage them • Understanding of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and when to recognise individuals who might require legal advice and signpost accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) • Protect • Whistleblowing: list of prescribed people and bodies
Knowledge of processes to escalate potential patient safety and quality issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the range of professional duties for all registered staff groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint statement from the Chief Executives of statutory regulators of healthcare professionals • Health and social care regulators
Knowledge of wider policy initiatives, and sources of additional support from other organisations, as well as those within own organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping abreast of developments • Knowledge of the roles that other organisations play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHS England • Care Quality Commission • NHS Employers • NHS Providers
Knowledge of wider Freedom to Speak Up developments, best practice and direction from the National Guardian Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains knowledge of current good practice policy and guidance on speaking up in large complex organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Guardian's Office • National Guardian's Office: A guide for leaders in the NHS and organisations delivering NHS services

Driving continuous improvement: Review and improvement of Freedom to Speak Up guidance and processes

Some thinking about this competency

So, you have your Freedom to Speak Up guidance and processes in place even though they are relatively new. In fact, it's probably fair to say that colleagues are still getting used to both the idea of a Guardian and the guidance.

Questions for reflection

1. How well is your Freedom to Speak Up guidance and process working?
2. How do you know?
3. How are you capturing any feedback that colleagues may have given about their reactions to the guidance and processes?

Paying attention to colleagues' reactions is, of course, essential to making sure that your guidance and processes work for those they are designed to support. Yet you'll be time pressured, making it harder to adopt the attitude of continuous improvement that recording feedback requires - but the cycle of plan, do, study, act (PDSA) applies as much to your work as a Guardian as it does to your other responsibilities. In fact, being busy with Freedom to Speak Up guidance and processes could be misleading. You might interpret it as an indication of the success of your guidance and process whereas your colleagues might be keeping you busy because they don't understand them without your help!

Questions for reflection

1. When do you plan to review the effectiveness of your guidance and process?
2. Which other Freedom to Speak Up guidance will you want to compare yours with?
3. Who will you invite feedback from?
4. How and when will you invite feedback?

In thinking this through, you might like to look at the characteristics of useful feedback (as well as how defended or open you are to feedback) on page 28. You will also need to think about what you want to measure and the kinds of feedback that will give you the information you need.

This extract from the Institute of Healthcare Improvement's resources on measurement illustrate the point:

Three Types of Measures

Use a balanced set of measures for all improvement efforts: outcomes measures, process measures, and balancing measures.

Outcome Measures

How does the system impact the values of patients, their health and wellbeing? What are impacts on other stakeholders such as payers, employees, or the community?

For diabetes: Average hemoglobin A1c level for population of patients with diabetes

- For access: Number of days to 3rd next available appointment
- For critical care: Intensive Care Unit (ICU) percent unadjusted mortality
- For medication systems: Adverse drug events per 1,000 doses

Process Measures

Are the parts/steps in the system performing as planned? Are we on track in our efforts to improve the system?

- For diabetes: Percentage of patients whose hemoglobin A1c level was measured twice in the past year
- For access: Average daily clinician hours available for appointments
- For critical care: Percent of patients with intentional rounding completed on schedule.

Balancing Measures (looking at a system from different directions/ dimensions)

Are changes designed to improve one part of the system causing new problems in other parts of the system?

- For reducing time patients spend on a ventilator after surgery: Make sure reintubation rates are not increasing
- For reducing patients' length of stay in the hospital: Make sure readmission rates are not increasing

Questions for reflection

1. What do you want to measure and therefore to ask for feedback on (the structure, the content, the helpfulness of your guidance and processes)?
2. What kind of feedback do you want (numerical or verbal)?

Essentially, when you begin to review and want to improve your guidance and processes, you are moving into the territory of research and so might like to broaden out question, 2, above by also asking whether you're looking for qualitative or quantitative feedback. There's a resource on understanding this distinction between types of feedback below, (1).

To make your invitation to offer feedback as helpful as possible you might also like to think about asking for improvement ideas that link to your colleagues' feedback. So, for example, rather than just asking 'please rate the helpfulness of the Freedom to Speak Up guidance on a scale of 1 -10', you might add 'if your score falls below 8, please comment on how we could improve the guidance'.

As you begin to interpret the feedback, themes will hopefully emerge which you'll want to take action on. What and how you progress these brings us to the 'strategic' aspects of this competency.

Questions for reflection

1. What do you think makes a problem, choice or action 'strategic'?
2. How strategic do you consider yourself to be?

The dictionary defines strategic as "the identification of long-term or overall aims and interests and the means of achieving them". This indicates, then, that a strategic approach to how you review the feedback and improvement ideas would mean that you'd be looking for:

- the actions you can take that will make the biggest or most significant difference to how your guidance achieves its aims
- the sequence of early, mid and longer-term actions you can take that will achieve the same

During the Foundation Training, examples of strategic work included:

Proactive

- Communicating the role
- Inductions
- Training for managers and staff
- Developing partnerships

Strategic

- Triangulating data
- Looking for trends
- Aligning Freedom to Speak Up with corporate priorities

Reactive

- Listening to and supporting staff
- Ensuring investigations happen well
- Providing feedback

Tactical

- Working with Organisational Development teams
- Working with staff groups
- Looking for opportunities in change

Presenting to Leaders

- Presenting to leaders/ writing and presenting reports to senior leaders
- Speaking truth unto power

Facing the Frontline

- Walking the floor
- Ensuring feedback is given

What this clarifies is that you won't always be able to respond to every comment or meet every request; that won't always be practical or possible. What you will need to implement, though, are the most important improvements however you can. For example, your colleagues might say that they would like you to be more available to explain the guidance to them. You might not be able to offer this but you could produce a video in which you explain the Freedom to Speak Up guidance and process, so increasing your virtual availability.

To keep track of and see the relationship between the actions you plan to take, you might like to use a template like the following and to refer to resource 3, below:

[illegible]

Part of your action plan may well be some policy development, in partnership with others, which is distinct from a procedure in that:

Policies

Policies are clear, simple statements of how your organisation intends to conduct its services, actions or business. They provide a set of guiding principles to help with decision making.

Policies don't need to be long or complicated – a couple of sentences may be all you need for each policy area.

Procedures

Procedures describe how each policy will be put into action in your organisation. Each procedure should outline:

- Who will do what
- What steps they need to take
- Which forms or documents to use.

Procedures might just be a few bullet points or instructions. Sometimes they work well as forms, checklists, instructions or flowcharts.

By way of example, this is the Royal Marsden's Bullying and Harassment Policy Statement, taken from an extract of a 2016 Board Paper:

- **1. The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust (hereinafter called the Trust) will not tolerate any behaviour at any level in the organisation, which constitutes bullying or harassment. Any reported allegation of bullying or harassment will be investigated fully and promptly by the Trust and appropriate action will be taken which may include disciplinary proceedings against the offender which could result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**
- **1.2 All allegations concerning bullying or harassment will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly, sensitively and confidentially by the Trust and there will be no victimisation of any member of staff making or involved in a complaint.**

- **1.3 The 'Bullying and Harassment - Managing Incidents at Work Policy and Procedure' has been developed to enable members of staff who believe they have been the subject of bullying or harassment to take action and to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities under the policy.**
- **1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's policy on Equality and Diversity and with reference to the Grievance and Disputes Policy and Procedure and the Employment Partnership Principles.**

Finally, strategy also indicates that you keep the bigger picture in mind. So the last question to ask yourself might be how you can develop your Freedom to Speak Up strategy in line with other areas, e.g., safety and quality, through working with key stakeholders to ensure that your next steps are integrated rather than isolated.

Useful resources:

1. Types of feedback.
2. Institute of Healthcare Improvement resources on the PDSA cycle and wider quality improvement resources.
3. Community Tool Box resources.
4. Manage your volunteers.
5. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Office - Freedom to Speak Up e-learning training
6. Freedom to Speak Up policy for the NHS
7. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Office - Reflection and planning tool
8. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Office - A guide for leaders in the NHS and organisations delivering NHS services

Driving continuous improvement: Development of strategies and action plans to improve Freedom to Speak Up culture

Some thinking about this competency

Whilst the last competency looks at strategies and action plans to improve Freedom to Speak Up guidance and process, this section considers how you can use both to improve Freedom to Speak Up culture.

Questions for reflection

1. What do you think culture is?
2. What do you think culture is made up of?
3. How would you describe your current Freedom to Speak Up culture, its strengths and weaknesses?
4. How might you begin to improve Freedom to Speak Up culture?

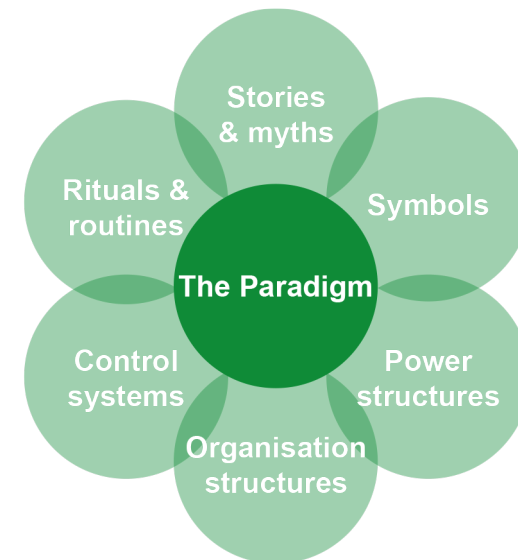
There are numerous studies of culture and culture change within and outside healthcare, with one widely accepted definition of culture being “patterns of action and interaction” (Johnson and Scholes, 1988). Another, more recent definition, comes from John Amaechi in his book “The Promises of Giants”, in which he describes culture as being “defined by the worst behaviours tolerated”. These are helpful ways of thinking about culture because it means that changing it doesn’t necessarily require expensive analysis or a major change programme. How two people speak and what they talk about is a ‘pattern of interaction’ – if we talk in new ways about different things then we are contributing to culture change! In fact, this is the essence of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian’s role.

Useful resources:

1. Johnson, G., on use of [The Cultural Web](#).
2. [Mindtools on using the SWOT analysis tool](#).
3. [Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development’s resource on using the PESTLE tool](#).
4. [Using the Pugh Matrix](#).

1. [Understanding the Pareto Chart](#).
2. [IHI Project Planning Form](#).

Johnson and Scholes (1988) helpfully provided us with a way of mapping culture, too, so that we can think about how well each in turn supports Freedom to Speak Up. Please refer to resource 2, below, to use this for yourself:



You can combine this tool with some other useful strategic analysis models, such as SWOT (2), PESTLE (3), the Pugh Matrix (4) and Pareto (5), each of which are explained in the resources section on this page.

For example, combining the Cultural Web with the SWOT analysis might indicate that your organisational structures (roles, reporting lines, functions) are a strength whilst your rituals and routines are a weakness. As a result, you could identify some of the rituals and routines (1-1s, how meetings and handovers are undertaken) and create a solid plan for their improvement. A combination of action plans in the form of a project plan (7) to strengthen areas of weakness could, using this thinking, improve your Freedom to Speak Up culture.

The pandemic and ongoing socio-economic challenges continue to highlight the importance of inequalities within healthcare organisations and for health outcomes. These influences, combined with workforce shortages are likely to aggravate existing cultural tensions, increasing the likelihood of issues pertaining to incivility, disrespect, marginalisation, workplace inequalities and exclusion.

Questions for reflection

1. How does your own gender and ethnicity affect your ability to influence?
2. How do the cases and concerns that you are currently supporting relate to equalities?
3. What do you notice about your organisation's relative receptivity to cases about inequality?

The importance and prevalence of inequalities in healthcare continues to shape the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian policy landscape. Some of the most helpful policy and practice guidance for your role is offered below:

Useful resources:

1. The National Guardian's Office report on [The impact of ethnicity on speaking up](#)
2. NHS England – [15:1 programme](#) – short videos to help you learn about religion, culture and communication, the equality act and civility and respect
3. [Civility Saves Lives](#) website
4. [The NHS Civility and Respect guide](#) aims to support and promote cultures of civility and respect.
5. NHS Policy on [Equalities: NHS Equalities](#)
6. NHS Employers - [Professionalism and Cultural Transformation Toolkit](#)

The importance of inclusion to healthy workplaces and patient outcomes has given rise to a significant amount of important development work on creating compassionate cultures.

Questions for reflection

1. How do you see compassion expressed in your workplace culture?
2. What would improve staff experience of compassion?

Professor Michael West is a leading voice in developing workplace cultures of compassion and talks about the simplest act of compassion being in how we interact with other colleagues. He identifies four important ingredients for any exchange to be truly compassionate. These are that we need to be (i) present, in the sense of genuinely paying attention, (ii) understand (grasp what we are hearing), (iii) empathise (understand what this means for the person in front of us) and only then (iv) take right action. You will already be offering this kind of presence in your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role but if you would like to know more then please read this fuller description of his work and related materials:

Useful resources:

1. The Kings Fund – [Compassionate and Inclusive Leadership](#) - Professor Michael West
2. NHS Leadership Academy – [Bitesize learning e.g., compassionate leadership, building inclusion](#)
3. NHS – [Inspiration sharing the “why’s” and the “how’s” of compassionate and inclusive leadership](#)

We are all part of the work of building cultures of compassion and inclusion and you, in your Guardian role, play an important and powerful part. Before moving on to the next section where we think about your own development more fully, you might like to look at the resources below to strengthen your understanding of the many forms of bias and micro-aggressions:

Useful resources:

1. [Harvard association Implicit tests \(recognising bias\)](#)
2. NHS Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust – [Toolkit Challenging Microaggressions](#)
3. CIPD - [5 Powerful TED Talks on ethnic diversity and unconscious bias](#)

Driving continuous improvement: Development of strategies and action plans to improve Freedom to Speak Up culture

Some thinking about this competency

The very fact that you are using this Development Guide confirms your commitment to your own learning, improvement and personal development.

So, how do you know what to learn and improve? The challenge in answering this question is that we know ourselves from the inside-out and our colleagues know us from the outside-in; in other words, we can be clearer about our intention than we are about our impact. How much do you really understand about what it's like to be on the receiving end of you?

The well-known Johari Window (1955) captures this perspective well:

Proactive

Information about yourself that you and others know.

Blind Self

Information you don't know but others know about you.

Hidden Self

Information you know about yourself but others don't.

Unknown Self

Information about yourself that neither you or others know.

Of course, the only way of understanding our 'blind self' or spot is to ask for feedback and to do so regularly, for new Guardians, it is useful to reflect on this during conversations with your mentor.

Questions for reflection

1. How regularly do you ask colleagues and managers for feedback?
2. How specific are you about the feedback you ask for? Asking colleagues for their views on your strengths and weaknesses can be less useful than asking them how you can improve on, for example, your presentation skills.
3. How open are you to the feedback you receive?
4. Are you as receptive to constructive feedback as to appreciative feedback?

This last point is very important as we frequently think about development as being about strengthening weaknesses or filling gaps. What, though if your development was as much about recognising and building on strengths? This is exactly what the often quoted section from Nelson Mandela's inaugural address invites us to consider:

*"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure...
Your playing small does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you"*

*'A Return to Love : Reflections on the Principles of a Course in Miracles'
by Marianne Williamson, which was used by Mandela.*

Questions for reflection

1. What are your strengths? Please make a note of up to five real strengths that you bring to your Freedom to Speak Up work.
2. How can you develop your strengths still further?

If you're unsure about your strengths then spend a few minutes jotting down the casual appreciations that you receive. What do these suggest about your strengths? What do people come to you for? Maybe even ask a few trusted colleagues how they see your stand out abilities, qualities and achievements. If you're intrigued by this perspective and would like to take it further then take a look at resource (3), below.

The other essential influence on your on-going professional development is the quality of your reflection.

Questions for reflection

1. What do you think reflection is?
2. How often do you make time to do it?

Reflection is the habit of observing yourself with both kindness and criticality. It is not mulling over something you wish you had said or done on the way home from work, regretting or wishing that things had been different. It is reviewing an event, observing your impact and recognising how your behavior was influenced by events. At best, reflection doesn't simply increase your awareness but fundamentally benefits your ability to manage yourself well. (4)

Examples of the kinds of questions you might ask yourself when you want to reflect on an event include:

- a. What happened?
- b. How did my behavior contribute to what happened?
- c. What influenced my attitude and behavior?
- d. In the same circumstances, what would I want to do differently?
- e. How can I make sure that I do respond differently if this happens again?

To get yourself started with this, you might want to build some reflective time into your weekly schedule, maybe making a note in a special journal. Even building five minutes into the end of your day to ask yourself 'what went well and how can I build on that tomorrow?' and 'what didn't go so well and how can I learn from this?' makes a real difference to your ability to take control of your own learning and development.

Useful resources:

1. Johari Window (1955), Jo Luft and Harrington Ingham
2. Williamson, M. (1992) *A Return to Love*. Harper Collins, London.
3. Video by [Marcus Buckingham on Knowing Your Strengths](#).
4. [HSJ article on the importance of reflective practice in Healthcare](#).
5. Video on [Facilitating Reflective Practice in Clinical Education \(2013\)](#).
6. [Open University on reflection](#).
7. Dye, V. (2011) 'Reflection, Reflection, Reflection. I'm thinking all the time, why do I need a theory or model of reflection?', in McGregor, D. and Cartwright, L. (ed.) *Developing Reflective Practice: A guide for beginning teachers*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education (pp. 19-37). To find, type the article heading into the search facility on the [OU website](#).
8. University of Cumbria material on [Gibbs' reflective cycle](#).
9. Smith, M. K. (2001, 2011). '[Donald Schön: learning, reflection and change](#)', the encyclopedia of informal education.

Driving continuous improvement: The importance of mindset

For many Guardians, there are two recurring and essential developmental challenges that need to be navigated. Neither of them are competencies as such, both being closer to the attitude or mindset that characterises how you inhabit the role.

Questions for reflection

1. Without reading on, what are the top two developmental challenges in the role for you personally?
2. Guardians often talk about the Impostor Syndrome and the Saviour Syndrome. On a scale of 1-10 where 1 is low and 10 is high, how do you currently score on both?

You now might be even more interested to read that both challenges relate to this second question, the first challenge being how to manage the compassionate neutrality required in the role and the second being how to look after yourself. When we experience either or both the Impostor or Saviour Syndrome we can find ourselves doing too much in the mistaken belief that more is both helpful and healthy.

If this is true for you then now is a good time to think again.

Questions for reflection

1. What is the relationship between looking after yourself and the Impostor and Saviour Syndromes for you?
2. How much of your energy for the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role comes from your own experience of concerns not being addressed or being addressed poorly? How does this effect your approach to supporting others?

Some thinking about neutrality

The first thing to note is that 'neutrality' is not the same as not caring. In fact, it's related to the importance of 'deliberate calm' in leadership (a term that McKinsey developed during the Pandemic) and the 'passionate detachment' that Buddhism describes. Rather than not caring, compassionate neutrality is about maintaining a healthy emotional distance to support clear thinking and right action. It's about:

- Not overly identifying with those you support
- Managing your emotions so that you can help your colleague to think through their experience and options
- Being ambitious for impact and positive change but not defined by the outcomes you are able to influence
- Remaining vigilant about the boundaries of your role, what is and isn't appropriate.

All Guardians want to be helpful and often need to rethink and remain continuously vigilant about what being appropriately helpful looks like in this role; it is not 'taking over' or representing. It is facilitating colleagues to take the best steps for themselves with full awareness of all available routes and likely implications. Finding ourselves doing too much for others is sometimes actually a sign that we are under pressure, overwhelmed or not looking after ourselves.

Useful resources:

1. Information on the [Impostor Syndrome](#).
2. Information about [Saviour Syndrome](#).

Driving continuous improvement: Passionate Detachment

Some thinking about looking after yourself

We can invest so much time and energy in looking after others that there's simply no time left for looking after ourselves. And it can be hard to remember the wisdom behind every flight instruction 'fix your own oxygen mask before you fix anyone else's'. This, then, is the place for what Charles Handy calls 'proper selfishness'; in all caring work, we need to attend to ourselves to be better able to care for others.

Questions for reflection

1. How/do you care for yourself to better care for others?
2. In what ways does your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian work support your wellbeing? In what ways does it drain your wellbeing?
3. Which specific aspects of your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian boost your energy? Which specific aspects drain your energy? How can you organise your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian workload to better manage your energy?

What's important about this last question is that wellbeing is uniquely personal, so what drains some will energise others. We also know that acts of kindness often enhance wellbeing, meaning that caring work often paradoxically creates a wellbeing boost. We also know that learning together builds wellbeing, which is a good argument for using this Development Guide with peer Guardians and in your Networks.

In these rewarding and demanding roles, it's important to maintain your own wellbeing. Some of the following resources may be useful to review:

Useful resources:

1. [NHS health and wellbeing framework](#)
2. [NHS Employers *How are you feeling NHS?* Toolkit wellbeing snapshot – includes tips and hints to boost wellbeing](#)
3. [Supporting our NHS people](#) – tips on helping you manage your health and wellbeing and look after others
4. [NHS – Check my emotional and mental wellbeing](#)
5. [NHSNWLA – Healthy leadership framework self-assessment](#)
6. [NHS England – Wellbeing apps](#)
7. [Free personalised report on the influences on your current wellbeing – RobertsonCooper iResilience questionnaire](#)
8. [Free, three-week online programme from The King's Fund on *Leading Well for Staff Health and Wellbeing*](#)
9. [National Guardian Office – Guardian support and wellbeing](#)

Measuring effectiveness and impact: Development of measures/indicators of local Freedom to Speak Up culture /Data Handling/ Assessment of the effectiveness of Freedom to Speak Up processes and activities/ Demonstration of the impact that Speaking up is having

Some thinking about this competency

Before you begin to keep folders of information, it is important to stop and ask the question about what effectiveness means in the context of Freedom to Speak Up.

Questions for reflection

1. How will you know when you have developed an effective Freedom to Speak Up culture?
2. What will indicate that your Freedom to Speak Up culture is improving?
3. What kinds of information do you need to record so that you can see the patterns and trends that will confirm whether your culture is improving?

For example, you may want to record the following:

- the overall scale of Freedom to Speak Up activity, i.e. how many cases have been raised in what time period?
- the type of incidents which are being raised
- the staff groups that are speaking up
- where most cases are coming from by specialty. For example, are there more instances of speaking up in Accident and Emergency than in Paediatrics?

Yet, the number of people speaking up will only be part of the story. If you work in a large organisation with an equally high number of cases yet with a Staff Survey that says people still do not feel safe to speak up, then there is more cultural work to do. Similarly, a low number of cases with the same Staff Survey responses would give a similar message.

Of course, as a minimum you will need to align your records with the National Guardian's Office request for information:

The number of cases raised to Freedom To Speak Up Guardians, champions, ambassadors etc in your organisation in total

Anonymised data shared with the NGO

The number of issues with an element of :

- patient safety/quality
- worker safety or wellbeing
- bullying or harassment
- other inappropriate attitudes or behaviours
- where people indicate that they are suffering disadvantageous and/or demeaning treatment as a result of speaking up brought by professional/ worker groups

Themes from feedback and learning points.

People speaking up

The number of cases raised by particular staff groups, your return for this section should equal the total number of cases raised, given above.

Feedback

The **total** number of responses you have had to the feedback question: ***'Given your experience, would you speak up again?'***

The number of these that responded

The top three most common themes to the feedback that you have received in response to the feedback question

Learning

A summary of the main learning points you have made over this quarter

As a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian it will help to be aware of the following:

- Number of cases raised
- Feedback on those cases raised
- Staff Survey results inc variation
- Bullying and Harassment
- Reports
- Grievances
- Serious Incidents
- Never events
- Issues raised to CQC
- Exit interviews
- Incident reporting
- Retention figures
- Suspensions
- Disciplinarys
- 'Some other substantial reason'
- Litigation

You might also find it useful to refer to the material on Types of Measures in the Improvement section on page 22. There are some important practical considerations about how you record the data you keep:

- You are required to follow your organisation process with respect to data control; retention periods and ensure systems and processes, maintain appropriate levels of privacy and confidentiality
- You will need to ensure that you reference your cases in such a way that you can easily retrieve the file/information.
- As people speak up to you, you will need to think about the process of collecting the information you need. What are the issue or issues, e.g. a case involving allegations of bullying may have an impact on patient safety or quality of care. You need to record the facts of the case clearly: times, dates, settings, witnesses, behaviours, confidentiality requested.
- Because your records will include sensitive, personal data you will need to meet the requirements of the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#). You are responsible for following the data protection principles and ensuring the information you collect is limited to the specifically stated purposes of Freedom to Speak Up. and is kept safe and secure. Contingency planning must also be considered for long periods of absence.

Once you have addressed these practical issues, you will have some information that you can turn into data as the basis for your measurement of effectiveness.

Presenting your Data

The information you collect needs to be presented clearly so that patterns emerge over time. You will need to think about the best way to present a summary of your position, whilst being mindful about confidentiality, which will help you to draw senior leaders' attention to particular issues. Usually, tables, bar charts and pie charts are easiest to understand. For example, the following tables indicate different patterns of activity and themes:

Month	No of Contacts	Open	Closed	Anonymous	Off Site Meetings
September	1	1	1	0	0
October	9	4	5	0	7
November	8	6	2	0	2
December	4	2	3	0	TBA
TOTAL	22	12	10	0	9

Staff Group	Number	Organisation	Numbers	Themes	Numbers
A&C	4	XXXX	4	Patient Safety	3
Nursing & Midwifery	5	XXXX	5	Attitudes & Behaviours	14
AHP's	5	XXXX	5	Workers Safety	3
Medical & Dental	3	XXXX	3	Bullying & Harassment	1
Students	3	XXXX	3	Demeaning	1
Other	2	XXXX	2		

The resource at (1), in the useful resources section on this page, offers guidance on creating and presenting bar charts, graphs and pie charts.

Questions for reflection

1. Looking at the information in the tables above, how would you describe this pattern of activity to the senior leaders?
2. To what extent would you see this as a positive or negative pattern?
3. What would you suggest senior leaders pay particular attention to?
4. How familiar are you with the Guardian's Office Case Reviews, which offer helpful insight into typical, challenging and recurring issues?

Interpreting your data

It is important to appreciate that the data you present about the number of cases and their type is often ambiguous: high numbers could be a sign of good publicity and low numbers could mean the opposite. For this reason, you should be extremely cautious about any suggestions that matters are generally deteriorating or improving.

And you should take care that the data does not to give a misleading impression. For example, if there are more reports from nursing staff than medical staff, is that because there are more of them? You should also think about how you report caseload. Is an increase due to more new cases or also due to an increase in the backlog of old, unresolved cases? Think about how long cases are taking to resolve and how to report outcomes. Think about the questions you will be asked about the data and provide a commentary in your report to answer them. Questions could include: Why are cases taking longer? Why are some cases resolved and others not?

Questions for reflection

1. What administration and security is required to manage your data efficiently and in line with the Data Protection Act, 1998 (e.g. password protection, encryption, agreements with individuals providing the evidence).
2. What is the purpose of my reports – am I reassuring senior leaders that Freedom to Speak Up policy is being implemented well, am I asking them to make decisions?
3. How will I report caseload, timeliness, cases resolved, work in progress, cases not progressed?
4. How frequently will you present information so that you can see patterns and trends over time?
5. Am I challenging senior leaders to make improvements linked to the reporting themes?
6. How will I ensure that I get feedback to make improvements?

Useful resources:

1. [Guidance from the Office of National Statistics on presenting information in tables, bar charts and graphs.](#)
2. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Office Request for Information Form.
3. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Guidance For Freedom to Speak Up Guardians: [Recording Cases and Reporting Data](#). February 2022.
4. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Office - [Gap Analysis Tool](#)
5. National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's Office - [Speak Up Reviews](#)
6. NHS England - [The Model Health System](#)
7. NHS - [Freedom to Speak Up policy for the NHS](#)

Time management and prioritisation: Development and support of a Network of Freedom to Speak Up influencers (where appropriate)

Some thinking about this competency

We discussed networking in the earlier Partnerships and Relationship Management competency, specifically on page 19. Yet this area is linked but different as it's about how you develop a group of people around you, to help, support and promote your Freedom to Speak Up work.

Questions for reflection

1. How have you developed your network of influencers?
2. What do you think your network is for?
3. How does your approach compare with other Guardians?

For some of us, our network will be friends and colleagues that we work most closely with and those we can speak openly to. Yet there are other criteria that you might usefully think about. We might be looking to involve colleagues who both care and can actively strengthen the Speaking Up culture and who:

- Already have an extensive network themselves
- Staff naturally seek out for support
- Are passionate about Speaking Up
- Have capacity to support you in your Freedom to Speak Up role
- Are influential within the organisation
- May be able to take over from you in the future

A well-known and amusing resource on building a network of support is included at (1), below.

Useful resources:

1. Derek Silvers 'Leadership Lessons from a Dancing Guy'.

Time management and prioritisation: Ability to manage/oversee multiple cases and own priorities

Some thinking about this competency

As part of your role as Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, you may also support a network of Freedom to Speak Up Champions. Whilst champions will not be handling cases, they are still likely to be contacted about and affected by difficult and distressing issues. Champions should therefore be given appropriate support. You will also need to juggle and manage potentially competing priorities so that you and your network achieve what matters most.

Questions for reflection

1. How do you prioritise your work now?
2. Being completely honest with yourself, what are your main time wasters? For example, do you take on too much, try to do everything yourself, struggle to say 'no' to a worthy request, find it difficult to bring conversations to a close, procrastinate, leave things until the last minute?
3. Having identified your time wasters, what will you do about them from now on?

Questions 2 and 3 are important because managing our own priorities isn't only about knowing what they are but also about staying focused on them even when we're busy with other things. Not managing our 'time wasters' with discipline is usually the main reason we get distracted.

The clearer our priorities are, the easier it is to stay on track. One of the best tools to help with prioritisation is Stephen Covey's importance/urgency table (where urgency tells you how quickly something needs to be done and importance is about how much it matters).

See if you can plot the work you have planned to do today on this:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	1 Crisis Pressing Issues Deadlines Meetings	2 Preparation Planning Prevention Relationship Building Personal Development
Not Important	3 Interruptions Some mail Many popular activities	4 Trivia Some phone calls Excessive TV/Games Time wasters

A few possible ways of using this include:

- Not putting something important off for so long that it becomes urgent (and then you don't have the time to do it as well as you'd like to).
- Being wary of other people giving you their 'urgent' business (always check out what 'urgent' means for them).
- Asking yourself what your top priorities are at the beginning of every day and then reviewing how you got on at the end of each day.

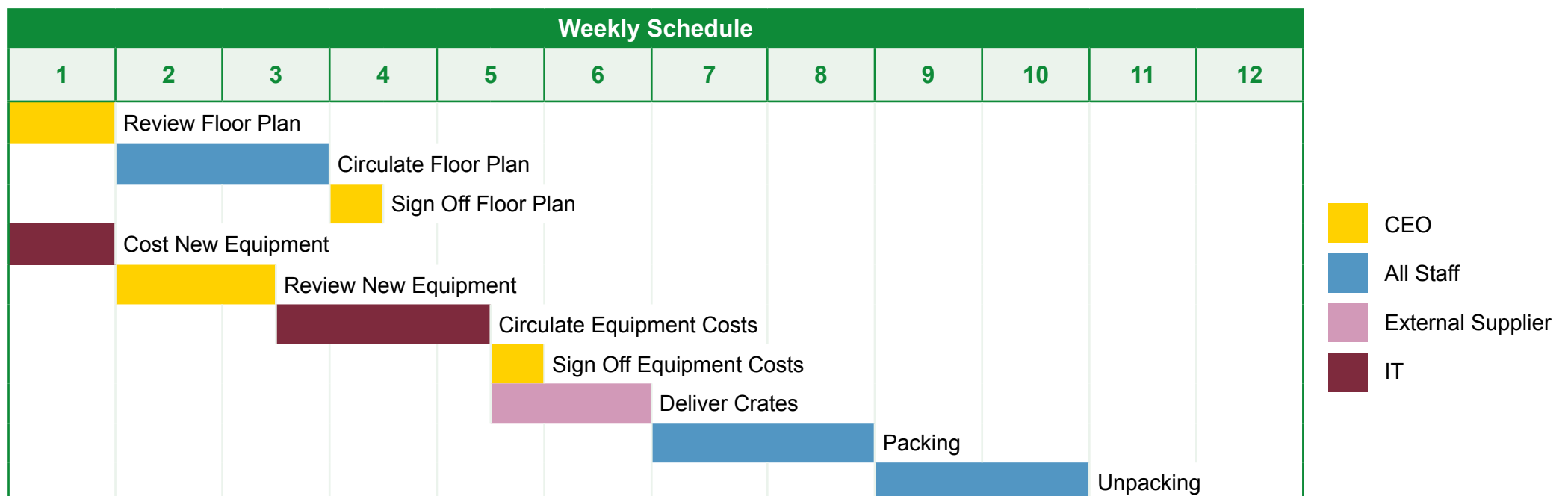
Useful resources:

1. National Guardian Office – [Developing Freedom to Speak Up Champion and Ambassador Networks](#)

If you want to take this further, you might be interested in creating a time plan for yourself using something like a Weekly Schedule – there are plenty of templates available online if you google ‘time plan templates’. Creating something like this for yourself can really help you to stay on track and, better still, to see that you’re making progress when you are!

Weekly Schedule						
Date	Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Planning time becomes even more important when you’re managing multiple pieces of work, especially if you’re supervising colleagues’ cases. One way of keeping on top of everything is to create a Gantt Chart (see reference 4, below), to help you and your colleagues know what needs to be done by when and how one piece of work effects another. An example of a Gantt Chart for an office move is shown below:



As well as managing time, overseeing multiple cases means that you may need to supervise your colleagues. If you're interested in finding out how others approach this, you could meet with one of your Union Stewards to discuss how their Union Officers approach supervision with them. For example, the RCN produces detailed guidance for their Officers (at 5 and 6, below).

Questions for reflection

1. How do you feel about supervising colleagues?
2. What do think effective supervision involves?
3. How will you manage any expectations of confidentiality around this?
4. Think of a time when you were supervised really well. What did your supervisor do and how can you do the same or similar?
5. What do you want colleagues to be saying about your case management?

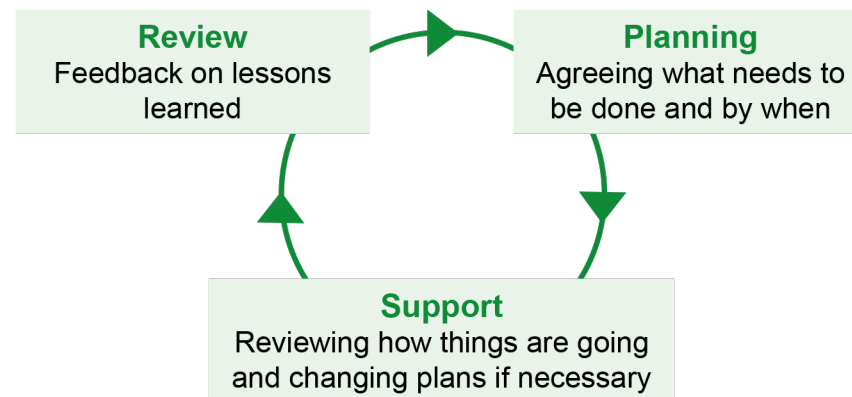
Whilst supervising cases doesn't make you a manager or leader, it does mean that you will be using some management and leadership skills. So, if you're not already in a management position then you'll get some really useful experience from supervising cases. The Social Care Institute for Excellence sees effective supervisors as:

"Those who have the requiredknowledge to assist supervisees in their work, provide emotional support and who have the qualities to develop positive working relationships".

Offering effective case supervision will mean meeting each of your colleagues regularly (either individually or in small groups) to:

1. Plan the work (agree what needs to be done by whom and when)
2. Support progress with the work (review how things are going and revise plans if necessary)
3. Review lessons learned (both about the work and your colleagues' approach)

Ingredients of Effective Supervision



In addition to time management and reflective practice, the key skills you'll need to do this well include:

1. Goal setting (see resource 5 on delegation and 8 on goal setting, below)
2. Giving feedback (see resource 9, below and pages 161-163 of the Handling Challenging Conversations chapter, on page 44)

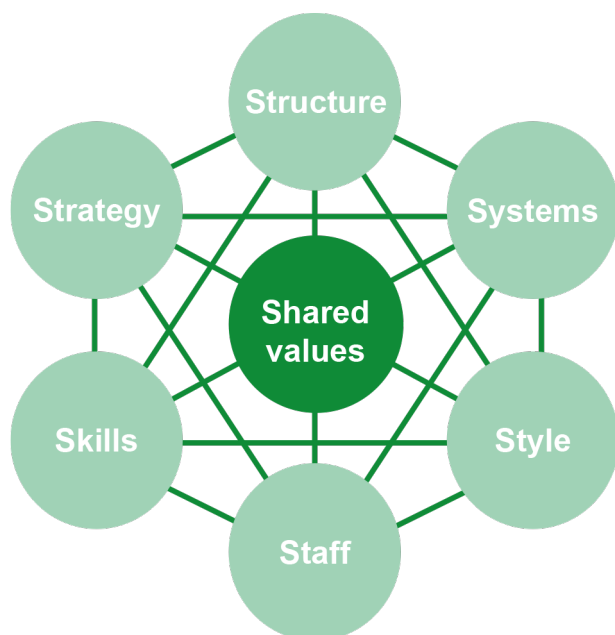
Useful resources:

1. [A guide to using Stephen Covey's time management quadrant.](#)
2. Covey, S. (1989) The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.
3. Information from MindTools on [how to plan time effectively.](#)
4. Information from MindTools on [Gantt Charts.](#)
5. RCN Guidance on [Delegation and Accountability.](#)
6. Social Care Institute for Excellence: [Guidance on management and supervision](#)
7. [Guidance on effective supervision.](#)
8. [Spark People on goal setting.](#)
9. [NHSE on giving feedback.](#)

Training and capability building: Assessment of the knowledge and capability of staff to speak up and to support others when they speak up

Some thinking about this competency

Another well-known perspective on culture change is the McKinsey 'Seven S' framework. Following this way of thinking (1), culture is made up of – and therefore can be changed – through the consistency between an organisation's values, strategy, structure, systems, staff, style and skills:



As one of these seven influences, developing the skills of your colleagues to be able to speak up and to support others when they speak up is essential. Of course, any skill requires the necessary knowledge (understanding what and why), supported by the right capability (being able to use knowledge in practice). As this framework equally suggests, staff not speaking up may have less to do with their skill and more to do with the support and previous reaction to speaking up that comes from your senior leaders, organisational strategy and shared values

Questions for reflection

1. How would you describe staff knowledge and capability to speak up in your organisation?
2. What informs your view?
3. How can you assess the actual knowledge and capability level of your colleagues?
4. Who else can help you to make a confident and informed assessment of your colleagues' knowledge and capability?

Useful resources:

1. National Guardian Office [Freedom to Speak Up Training](#)

As a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, you will have exceptional insight into the knowledge and capability of staff who have come to you for support. It will also be useful for you to work with your HR colleagues, and others with responsibility for assessing capability. Not only will they have detailed views informed by their day-to-day work but they are also likely to have access to data such as Learning and Development Needs Analysis, collation of appraisal data and access to Staff Survey results specifically around speaking up.

Similarly, Union Representatives, Organisational Development team and staff diversity networks will be able to add a valuable perspective.

Questions for reflection

1. How well established are your relationships with your HR, Union, EDIB colleagues, wellbeing leads and staff diversity groups?
2. How will you practically assess staff knowledge and capability?

The practicalities of assessing staff requires that you think about not only what you're assessing but also how you undertake it. So, do you have or could you develop a framework of Speaking Up knowledge and skills, similar to and informed by the Guardians' Competency Framework? If not, could you ask each staff colleague who comes to you for guidance what essential skills and knowledge they need to speak up? Alternatively, and to make your assessment inclusive and participative, could you hold a dedicated meeting to establish staff knowledge and capability?

Looking ahead to making the assessment easier in future years, might it be worth planning ahead with HR colleagues to include Speaking Up in staff appraisals, so integrating the conversation to make sure that there is regular focus on and reminder about staff responsibility to speak up?

Useful resources:

1. [Enduring Ideas: The 7-S Framework.](#)

Training and capability building: Taking action to ensure that all staff have the skills and knowledge they need to enable them to speak up effectively and to support others to do so

Some thinking about this competency

Once you've assessed skills and knowledge, you'll want to make sure that your colleagues know everything they need to know to be able to speak up effectively.

Questions for reflection

1. How frequently do you meet with HR and Union representatives to discuss developing staff speaking up skills and knowledge?
2. Are you discussing the quarterly data on speaking up that you're providing to the National Guardians' Office with HR and Communications colleagues?
3. How could you incorporate the messages behind this data into organisational training and communications to make sure Speaking Up is regularly in colleagues' minds?

Ensuring that staff know what they need to know requires good, regular communication and so it might be useful to consider:

- Writing a regular newsletter yourself; or
- Working with Communications colleagues to ensure there's a regular update in organisation wide staff communications
- Asking your senior leaders to refer to speaking up as part of their staff update
- Including frequent information in team briefs

Supporting staff to develop their speaking up skills will mostly be through organisational training and development. So, you could consider speaking to colleagues in Learning and Development about:

Questions for reflection

1. What kinds of training and development does the organisation currently offer?
2. How speaking up skills can be integrated into every organisational training programme. For example, how does and could speaking up skills be included in Leadership Programmes, Induction, Board Development, mandatory training?
3. Could you develop own tailored training resource that complies with the National Training Office guidelines specifically for speaking up training?
4. How could you take Freedom to Speak Up Training out of the training context and integrate it into, e.g., team meetings?

One perspective that may prove helpful when thinking about supporting colleagues to learn is the idea of Learning Styles and approaches – simply because some of us learn best from reading, others from watching, some from reflecting and others from having a go. If you're interested in this you can complete the questionnaire below and ask your colleagues to do so as well.

1. Useful resources:

2. Adam Galinsky, [How To Speak Up For Yourself](#).
3. Download link: [Honey and Mumford's Learning Styles questionnaire](#)

Working with senior leaders: Development of strong and open working relationships with senior leaders

Some thinking about this competency

Connected systems supported by effective working relationships are critical to the provision of care quality. The point made in a Department of Health (2015) report remains relevant today; “the landscape of health and care has become fragmented in terms of both the numbers and activities of Trusts; within many Trusts silo working is endemic. This means that any activity within a Trust is horizontally separated from the same activity in other Trusts and vertically separated from other activities in its home Trust”. Though the development of integrated care systems is designed to address this, it remains clear that patient and worker experience relies on quality working relationships creating the connections in and across organisations that facilitate healthcare. In your role as a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian this is particularly true of the relationships you develop with senior leaders if you are to successfully influence change. And whatever your substantive role, being a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian means that you need to work closely with senior leaders:

“The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian will work alongside leadership teams to support the organisation in becoming a more open and transparent place to work, where all workers are actively encouraged and enabled to speak up and speaking up is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve”

Questions for reflection

1. How well do you build “quality working relationships” with senior leaders and what do you mean by “quality” in this context?
2. How would you describe the current quality of your working relationship with senior leaders?
3. How often do you meet your senior leaders individually or informally?

In smaller organisations, the difficulty of building strong relationships that can sustain through challenge often comes from the informality and even friendship that can naturally develop between people who see each other all the time. Whereas in large organisations, the challenge of building strong relationships with senior leaders results from the combination of a lack of informal contact, infrequent opportunities to meet and perceptions of difference. On this last, we know that inequalities directly and negatively affect patient care. This has been increasingly shown by the work of Dawson (2009, 2014), Kline (2014) and West et al (2011). The relevance here is that we need to accept that we all have differences, prejudices and biases and that understanding others’ perspectives helps us to work more positively together.

Questions for reflection

1. How like and unlike you do you perceive senior leaders to be? What effect does this have on how you relate to them?
2. What, if any, prejudices or biases do you have that might influence your relationships with senior leaders?
3. How do you think senior leaders would describe how similar and different they are from you?
4. What do you have in common with your senior leaders?

Perceptions of personal difference and distance are easily exaggerated by distinctions in role. As a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, your role requires and mandates you to be independent and direct. Whilst this stance and behaviour may come easily to some Guardians, it will be a development goal for others. This is likely to be similar for your senior leaders, so understanding what their roles require of them is an important part of building empathic, strong and open working relationships. You can make a good start in understanding the role of the various leaders in your organisation by looking at resources 8, 9 and 11 in the resources section, on the next page.

Useful resources:

1. Department of Health (2015) Better Leadership for Tomorrow: NHS Leadership Review (The Rose Report), London: Department of Health.
2. Dawson, J. (2009) Does the Experience of Staff Working in the NHS Link to the Patient Experience of Care? An Analysis of Links between the 2007 Acute Trust Inpatient and NHS Staff Surveys. Birmingham: Institute for Health Services Effectiveness, Aston Business School.
3. Dawson, J. (2014) Staff Satisfaction and Organisational Performance: evidence from a longitudinal secondary analysis of the NHS staff survey and outcome data. Health Services and Delivery Research, 2(1), 336.
4. Kline, R. (2014) The 'Snowy White Peaks' of the NHS. London: Middlesex University.
5. West, M., Dawson, J., Admasachew, L. and Topakas, A., (2011) NHS Staff Management and Health Service Quality: Results from the NHS Staff Survey and Related Data. Birmingham: Aston Business School.
6. Video: [Royal Society of Arts on Unconscious Bias](#).
7. Video: [Yassim Abdel \(2014\) What does my headscarf mean to you?](#) Courtesy TED.com recorded at TEDxSouthBank Sound 2012, under CC licence BY-NC-ND 3.0.
8. [Explanation of the difference between an Executive and a Non-Executive Board Director from A Ned on Board](#).
9. NHS Improvement, 2017, [explaining the role of the Non-Executive Director](#).
10. Video: [The Kings Fund: Guide to how the NHS is structured](#).
11. NHS Leadership Academy (2013) [The Healthy NHS Board](#).

Working with senior leaders: Production and presentation of reports to help senior leaders understand Freedom to Speak Up culture

Some thinking about this competency

Communicating by providing written reports to senior leaders is a real challenge for many of us, especially if we have no prior experience of writing Committee Papers or similar.

Questions for reflection

1. How many meetings of your senior leadership team have you been to?
2. How familiar are you with the way in which senior leadership meetings are conducted?
3. How can you attend senior leadership meetings to build confidence before you present your first paper?

Key to preparing a strong paper is your outline – a logical structure with easy signposts that enables the reader to follow the discussion to your intended conclusion. This means that you need to be clear about your intended impact and outcome and remain clear as you write; it is very easy to get carried away and write too much. To have maximum impact keep your report short and succinct – this will also save you time. If board members require clarification they can ask you questions when you present. As Mark Twain is quoted as saying, “I didn’t have the time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead”!

Questions for reflection

1. How many papers have you seen and which did you consider the best? Why?
2. What do you want readers to say about your papers? How can you hold this impact in mind as you write?
3. Who could you ask to read your paper and give you feedback before you submit it?

Thinking about the organisational and individual priorities of your senior leadership as you write is also important. What are the issues you need to mention for your paper to be influential? For example, if your senior team is addressing the levels of anonymous reporting, then how will your paper support this?

Looking at examples of recent Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Board Reports, the typical structure appears to be:

Part 1 (assessment of cases):

This should provide assurance that there is a swift evaluation, escalation and response process for issues being spoken up about. It should also record whether any resulting change has occurred, and what assurance the Guardian has received from the relevant manager that any such change will deal with the issues highlighted, and prevent future recurrences.

Part 2 (action taken) should:

- supply assurance that Freedom to Speak Up arrangements are under continuous evaluation for improvement
- identify any barriers that exist within your organisation, alongside strategies for their removal
- identify existing level of detriment to speaking up and any issues underlying this
- irrespective of how good or bad things are, provide assurance of the existence of good processes for dealing with this, that these processes are used, and that there is a plan for continued improvement
- demonstrate that user feedback, audit and gap analysis are being used to inform continuous improvement of speaking-up systems

In Part 3, the report makes recommendations.

There are a few best practice approaches to follow when preparing a paper for presentation. First is the need to turn data into information. Health and Care organisations are not short of data but this is infrequently turned into meaningful information that can be used as a rigorous basis for decision making. So, if you are presenting statistics then interpret them. Rather than simply including a set of figures in a report, tell the reader what they say. For example, where your paper includes the number of cases raised monthly in your organisation, the senior leadership will find it helpful to understand if this is a lower or higher number than elsewhere. If offering multiple data sets, help the reader by indicating what they mean when taken together. If you don't do this then the Board will lack insight and may take an unexpected track in their questioning.

Second, as mentioned above, is a logical structure. There are several popular structures, the most current being:

- a. SBAR (situation, background, assessment, recommendation); and
- b. Issue (what's this about?), facts (give clarity to the issue), reasoning (the points you need to make about the issue and facts), recommendation (what you are asking for).

A third best practice approach is to find out as much as possible about your audience. The unique issue with Board presentations is that the Non-Executives perform what is called the 'challenge function', namely they bring their independent judgement, experience and critical detachment to question what is put before them. It is important not to take their challenge as a sign of disapproval or of criticism; they are simply doing their job. And you are doing yours, which is to speak truth to power. So, when you are asked 'what do we need to do to achieve this?', you need to be well prepared to offer solutions, describe the barriers and take the opportunity to deliver change.

Questions for reflection

1. How might you react to your paper being challenged? How can you ensure that you react openly rather than defensively?
2. How much do you really know about your senior leadership's perspective on your paper? What has been discussed before? Where do different members stand on the issues? What are their expectations?

Clearly, you will need to be on your toes for the meeting itself. Practise with a colleague, making sure you set out the structure of the presentation at the start, then cover the content, followed by summarising your key messages and principle request. When questions follow, be prepared. If you do not know, say so and follow up with your answer after the meeting. Though appropriately challenging, members will usually not set out to trip you up, but if you are not prepared, you may trip yourself up. Carry out your own challenge in advance to be sure that you're receptive and responsive.

Useful resources:

1. Example NHSE Board Report which is the topic of discussion in the Board Meeting at (2): 'then read the [board paper](#) from which this table is taken'.
2. Example video of NHSE Board: [recording of the part of the board meeting where the paper was discussed](#).
3. [Australian Institute of Company Directors on writing effective Board reports using the "PACKO" principle](#).

Working with senior leaders: Holding senior leaders to account and challenging them to improve

Some thinking about this competency

Your ability to hold senior leaders to account and challenge them to improve is a legitimate part of your role as a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian; senior leaders are **expecting** you to do this. However, of course, that does not mean they will welcome your challenge or that they won't experience a natural human defensiveness when you present uncomfortable information. As Simon Sinek indicates in the resource mentioned below, you face the leadership dilemma of how to present difficult facts without the blame or judgement that produces shame but also without denying or diluting their seriousness. The additional characteristic here, though, is that you also need to influence or manage up.

Questions for reflection

1. How do you see 'managing up'?
2. What is your typical experience of being in a group of more senior colleagues?
3. How do you behave when you're with more senior colleagues? In what ways is your behavior helpful and unhelpful to engaging senior colleagues?

Clearly, the way we see 'managing up' has a huge bearing on our approach and behavior. How would you behave, for example, if you fully accepted Kotter and Gabarro's (1990) definition that "managing up is mutual dependence between two fallible human beings"? Maybe this important reminder of our human equality would enable you to approach interactions with more senior colleagues with the authority, compassion and rigor that your role requires.

It can also be helpful to reflect on the power you have in your role as a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. Many of us have a very limited concept of power which is confined to seniority and position. If you go into a Board room with this notion of power in mind then it will usually be true that you have less of it, which makes many of us respond either relatively submissively or the opposite, aggressively. To what extent do you recognise this in yourself?

If you do, then it's time to think differently about your power. French and Raven broaden the notion to include the power that comes from networks, knowledge, personality, expertise. Which do you enter the Board room with, even if you don't have equivalent seniority? Whose voice won't be heard unless you embolden your own?

Nonetheless, there is clear risk in giving potentially unwelcome news to more senior colleagues. As Heifetz (2009) describes, "getting an organisation to ...change is not easy. You need to confront loyalty to legacy practices and understand that your desire to change them makes you the target of attack". So, how do you manage and mitigate this risk?

It helps to understand how to give feedback well, as this is essentially what you are doing at scale in the Boardroom. It also helps to remember what it feels like to receive feedback.

Questions for reflection

1. Think of a time you were given developmental feedback. How did it make you feel? To what extent did your reactions change over time?

When we receive unexpected or unwanted feedback, our reactions run through a series of predictable stages. We move from a feeling of (S) shock, then maybe to (A) anger and often to (R) rejection. Only if we have time to reflect and come to terms with what's been said is there a good chance that we will move to a place of (A) acknowledging the merits in the message (SARA). What this suggests, then, is that it is helpful to say what needs to be said and then to offer your colleagues some time to digest the information. To what extent do you do this as opposed to speed through the message hoping for no resistance?

Of course, it also helps if we offer our feedback with sensitivity and skill.

Questions for reflection

1. Again, think of a time when you were given developmental feedback with skill. How was it given? How will you apply this to your feedback conversations?

Most of us would say that difficult feedback is easier to hear when it is:

- a. Given with positive intent
- b. Specific and behavioural
- c. Connected to impact
- d. Constructive

Questions for reflection

1. If you apply these criteria to your feedback, how many do you meet? What do you need to do differently to ensure that they all are?

Giving feedback may be one of the more challenging conversations that you will need to handle. The resource below offers you some more ideas on how to approach them with skill. As conversations are only one aspect of how you go about influencing, there is also a separate resource on this. Both will require your resilience, which you can begin to think about with the on-line questionnaire.

Useful resources:

1. “Managing Your Boss” was written by Professors Emeriti John J. Gabarro, PhD, and John P. Kotter, PhD.
2. Simon Sinek - *Why good leaders make you feel safe*.
3. Heifetz, R. (2009) Leadership in a permanent crisis. HBR.
4. French and Raven (1959) on power.
5. Free personalised report on the influences on your current wellbeing – [RobertsonCooper iResilience questionnaire](#)
6. Tamara Taggart - *Two conversations that changed my life*.
7. Chapter on Courageous Conversations by Philippa Williams and Jamie Ripman from ‘How to be a Nurse Leader’, 2017, Wiley. ISBN: 978-1-119-18699-1.
8. Google ‘Handling Challenging Conversations’ to find many more skill-building video resources on the subject.
9. Chapter on Influencing with Integrity by Louisa Hardman, from ‘How to be a Nurse Leader’, 2017, Wiley. ISBN: 978-1-119-18699-1.

The table below allows you to identify which competency relates **particularly** well to important Freedom to Speak Up Guardian personal qualities. Often there is more than one competency that expresses and so may develop an individual quality.

Competency								
Values	Communication	Partnership building and relationship management	Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems	Driving continuous improvement	Time management and prioritisation	Measuring effectiveness and impact	Training and capability building	Working with senior leaders
Courage Speaking truthfully and challenging appropriately	*			*				*
Impartiality Remaining objective and unbiased	*	*				*	*	*
Empathy Listening well and acting with sensitivity	*	*						
Learning Seeking and providing feedback and looking for opportunities to improve	*	*		*	*	*	*	

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the Self-Development Tool