

Press release

2 May 2023

Suzanne McCarthy announced as Independent Chair of National Guardian's Office

Suzanne McCarthy has been appointed as Independent Chair of the Accountability and Liaison Board for the National Guardian's Office.

A lawyer by background, she has held several senior public sector positions including Chief Executive of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and Chief Executive of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. She previously served as a Non-Executive Board member on the Boards of the General Medical Council, the Human Tissue Authority and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges. She is currently the Independent Chair of the Fire Standards Board and the Chair of two charities.

The National Guardian's Office leads, trains and supports the network of Freedom to Speak Up guardians throughout healthcare in England to support workers to speak up about anything which gets in the way of them doing their job. The National Guardian also provides challenge and learning to the healthcare system on matters related to speaking up as part of her remit.

The Accountability and Liaison Board seeks assurance and gives strategic advice to the National Guardian to promote her mission to make speaking up business as usual throughout healthcare. Members of the Accountability and Liaison Board are representatives of the funding bodies of the National Guardian's Office.

As the work of the National Guardian has developed, the Board wished to appoint an Independent Chair in line with good corporate governance. The role of the Independent Chair is to provide leadership of the Board, and to bring together the views of each of the individual members.

Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, National Guardian for the NHS said: *"I am delighted that Suzanne has accepted the position as Chair for our Accountability and Liaison Board.*

My office has a vital role in encouraging and supporting people to speak up safely about anything which gets in the way of providing great care, and I am excited to start working in partnership with Suzanne. Her extensive experience will be of great benefit, not just to myself and the Board, but for the work we do to improve the speaking up culture of the healthcare sector."

Sir Andrew Morris OBE Hon FRCP, Deputy Chair of NHS England and outgoing Chair of the Accountability and Liaison Board, said: *“I welcome Suzanne’s appointment as Independent Chair and look forward to working with her as a member of the National Guardian’s Office Accountability and Liaison Board. The role of Independent Chair is vital to harness the talents of the individual members of the Board and to bring together the funders of the National Guardian’s work. Her experience will be of great benefit the National Guardian’s Office and the embedding of Freedom to Speak Up throughout the NHS.”*

Suzanne McCarthy said: *“I am honoured to have been asked to take on this role from Sir Andrew Morris and Sir Robert Francis KC. I greatly look forward to leading the Accountability and Liaison Board and in doing so facilitate its contributions to the work of the NGO. I hope that together the National Guardian, her office and the Board will achieve a Speaking Up culture that is supported at all levels within the healthcare sector and consistently implemented.”*

Suzanne McCarthy will take up her role on 2nd May 2023.

For more information please contact: comms@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk

>ENDS<

Notes for editors:

About the National Guardian’s Office

The National Guardian’s Office works to make speaking up become business as usual to effect cultural change in the NHS.

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

The role of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and the National Guardian were established in 2016 following the events at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and recommendations from Sir Robert Francis’ Freedom to Speak Up Inquiry.

There are now over 1,000 Freedom to Speak Up guardians in over 600 NHS primary and secondary care and independent sector organisations, national bodies and elsewhere that ensure workers can speak up about any issues impacting on their ability to do their job.

www.nationalguardian.org.uk

Suzanne McCarthy



Initially working as a lawyer, with an LL.M. degree from Cambridge, Suzanne left private practice and lectured in law at Manchester University before entering the civil service. She worked first at the Home Office, serving as Private Secretary to two Home Secretaries, and then at HM Treasury.

She moved into running Arms-Length Bodies becoming CEO of both the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Her last Executive role was as the UK's Immigration Services Commissioner.

She has used her background in regulation and standard setting in her non-executive career. Her current positions include as the Independent Chair of the Fire Standards Board, and of two charities, Lepra, an international NGO focused on neglected tropical diseases, and Right to Succeed, a charity concerned with educational inequalities in the UK. She is a member of the Fundraising Regulator's Board and chair of its Standards Committee, and the Board of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and chair of its Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Her previous Board appointments include the University of London, (of which she was made a Fellow), the Advertising Standards Authority, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the General Medical Council, the Human Tissue Authority and Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals.