



# Requirements for recruiting and embedding Freedom to Speak Up guardians

A framework for organisations  
and leaders

May 2025



**National  
Guardian**

Freedom to Speak Up

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## **Requirements for recruiting and embedding Freedom to Speak Up guardians – a framework for organisations and leaders**

The National Guardian's Office has created a framework to support best practice in the hiring and deployment of Freedom to Speak Up guardians. This document provides an overview of the role of a guardian, the principles of Freedom to Speak Up and how to recruit and embed guardians in an organisation. It should be read in conjunction with the guardian role specification. The toolkit includes four job descriptions that will help you draft a job description for your organisation.

### **Who are Freedom to Speak Up guardians?**

The requirement for every NHS provider organisation and organisations contracted by the NHS to have one or more Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is identified in the NHS standard contract.

Freedom to Speak Up guardians play a pivotal role in promoting a culture of openness, transparency, and accountability within an organisation. They are an impartial resource, dedicated to ensuring all workers feel empowered to voice their concerns without fear of reprisal.

The guardian role is designed to meet several important outcomes. To achieve them, the role involves both reactive work such as case management and proactive elements such as addressing barriers to speaking up, communicating the role and making sure there is appropriate training in speaking up and supporting and challenging leaders, including through producing regular reports for the senior team or board.

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, integrated care boards, the independent sector, national bodies and hospices. All work with their organisation's leadership and alongside existing systems, enabling and empowering colleagues to speak up about anything they think affects the quality of patient care or worker experience. Guardians tackle barriers to speaking up where they are found.

### **Core principles for all Freedom to Speak Up guardians:**

There are five core principles a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian should align their work with.

1. **Championing a supportive environment**  
Actively foster a culture where all workers feel safe, valued, and supported when speaking up.
2. **Identifying and overcoming barriers**  
Proactively seek out and address obstacles that prevent workers from raising concerns, ensuring inclusive and equitable access to speaking up.
3. **Providing timely feedback and follow-up**  
Ensure workers who speak up receive timely, respectful, and meaningful responses, including updates on actions taken.
4. **Driving organisational learning and improvement**  
Use insights from concerns raised to support continuous learning, reflection, and positive change across the organisation.
5. **Ensuring robust governance and assurance**  
Maintain transparency and accountability through effective reporting, oversight, and integration with wider organisational governance structures.

### Key competencies required of all Freedom to Speak Up guardians

These competencies align with the [Freedom to Speak Up Guardian development guide](#), (March 2023) which was developed to help guardians build upon their existing skills and experience. An online self-assessment tool is available for use with this development guide.

More information can be found at Annex A.

- Communication
- Partnership building and relationship management
- Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems
- Driving continuous improvement
- Measuring effectiveness and impact
- Training and capability building
- Working with senior leaders

### How are Freedom to Speak Up guardians supported to fulfil their role?

It is strongly recommended that each organisation has a minimum of one full-time equivalent Freedom to Speak Up Guardian in place, aligned with the core role requirements. This recommendation is grounded in consistent themes emerging



from our ongoing support calls, direct engagement with organisational leaders, and analysis of guardian data, including training compliance and worker survey results.

Organisations that perform well in fostering a positive speaking up culture typically demonstrate a clear investment in dedicated guardian capacity. This resourcing is critical to ensuring visibility, accessibility, and the sustained impact of the guardian role.

\*Note: Ambulance Trusts should continue to follow the recommendation as detailed in [Listening to Workers – A Speak Up Review of ambulance trusts in England](#). The review suggested that as a minimum, the equivalent to three full-time workers is needed to carry out the reactive and proactive parts of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role in ambulance trusts. This is because of the characteristics of ambulance trusts, including their complex geographical footprint, and broader cultural and operational issues.

Organisations may appoint multiple people to work as Freedom to Speak Up guardians, either as whole-time equivalents or part time in the role to support flexible working. These part time roles can then add up to a whole-time equivalent or more.

For all appointments it is strongly recommended all Freedom to Speak Up guardians are appointed in a standalone role, supporting them to maintain independence of thought and impartiality in the workplace. However, where an organisation has an existing model where guardians have dual roles, they must ensure the guardian(s) has enough time to complete all aspects and tasks required. Guardians in this situation must be able to work in line with the guardian development guide. Failure to adequately support a guardian with required time may lead to non-compliance and removal from the guardian register. If support is required, please contact [enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk)

Where a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is unavailable due to absence such as leave, sickness, or where variations in working hours mean no guardian is available during normal working hours, internal cover arrangements should be made.

For absences of less than four weeks, the guardian must inform the people involved in open cases about alternative sources of support in out of office or telephone divert messages. If the absence lasts longer than four weeks, the Freedom to Speak Up executive lead in your organisation should ensure workers have access to another Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, alongside established speaking up routes. Those supporting workers other than the guardian, will not be able to access confidential case records unless consent has been gained. The Freedom to Speak Up executive



lead in your organisation must communicate absence of the guardian as soon as possible, with details of existing and alternative speaking up routes available. More information can be found here: [Starting Out, Stepping Down](#)

The Freedom to Speak Up provision should not be considered an urgent response service, and 24-hour guardian cover is not essential, but all workers should be aware of how to contact their named guardian at any time. This may be via email, form submission, or a case management system. However, for out of hours concerns, all workers should be aware of escalation routes for any immediate patient safety, worker welfare or safeguarding concerns. The reporting of safeguarding concerns is a statutory responsibility and may require immediate action or escalation.

Where there are multiple Freedom to Speak Up guardians, they must work closely together to deliver a unified guardian service while protecting the personal information of those workers speaking up. All Freedom to Speak Up guardians must be fully trained and registered with the National Guardian's Office before they take on any cases.

All Freedom to Speak Up guardians must complete the following relevant training provided by the National Guardian's Office:

- Foundation training - part one and part two – part one is undertaken before registration with part two a requirement within three months of registration.
- Annual refresher training.

Failure to comply with the above training requirements may result in removal from the National Guardian's Office register.

Freedom to Speak Up guardians are not required to have a clinical background but are expected to have knowledge of the National Guardian's Office, The Francis Review, the role of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, national and organisational Freedom to Speak Up policies, procedures, and the processes for speaking up within the workplace. They must also understand the importance of fostering a culture of openness and safety in the workplace.

Once trained and registered with the National Guardian's Office, Freedom to Speak Up guardians have access to resources to support them in their role, which they can access via a password protected site on the National Guardian's Office website.

Guardians are also expected to join, and attend, their regional guardian network group. Network meetings provide a safe space for guardians to meet their peers



regularly to discuss guardian related matters such as changes to policies, procedures or recommendations on how to go about their role.

## **Board and leadership responsibilities in relation to Freedom to Speak Up**

All organisations must have adopted NHS England's national speak up policy. In line with good practice, non-NHS organisations should adopt the policy with local variations.

All organisations must appoint an executive lead for Freedom to Speak Up and a non-executive director, or equivalent in non-NHS organisations, who will support the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and act as a means of escalation within the organisation. Due to perceived barriers to speaking up and potential conflicts of interest, it is not recommended that a worker already fulfilling a role on the board, or equivalent such as a trustee in a hospice, are appointed as a guardian. You can find further information in this guide B1245 ii NHS-freedom-to-speak-up-guide-eBook which is designed to be used by any senior team, owner or board in any organisation that delivers NHS commissioned services; the principles of which are easily transferable to other organisations.

All board members and organisational leaders are responsible for supporting Freedom to Speak Up guardians to fulfil their role. The senior lead for Freedom to Speak Up in the organisation (executive lead or non-executive director) should take responsibility for completing the planning and reflection tool, at least every two years. This improvement tool is designed to help you identify strengths in yourself, your leadership team and your organisation, and any gaps that need work.

Board members are responsible for identifying the right people to be Freedom to Speak Up guardians, who must be recruited through an open and transparent process. They must ensure the number of whole-time equivalents of Freedom to Speak Up guardians in post is proportionate to the size and complexity of their organisation, with one whole-time equivalent being the minimum recommendation. The Freedom to Speak Up guardian(s) must have direct access to an executive lead for Freedom to Speak Up, who they regularly meet with. They should be given the authority to make decisions and influence as appropriate within established operational structures. The Freedom to Speak Up guardian(s) should also work closely with the non-executive director who is responsible for Freedom to Speak Up. Information film for NEDs.

Freedom to Speak Up guardians must attend board meetings, at a minimum six-month interval, and should be involved in discussions about culture and worker safety and experience. Freedom to Speak Up guardians have a key role in





supporting the executive team to understand the most effective approaches to improving the value of the worker's voice in supporting the overall safety culture in the organisation.

In organisations that choose a model with a lead guardian, or multiple guardians, it is important to note that all guardians, regardless of status, must have the same access to senior leaders and board members. In most instances the lead guardian would be expected to present at board, with opportunity for other guardians to shadow to develop their knowledge and competencies. In this model, cases should not be shared between guardians without explicit consent from the worker who has spoken up. All guardians must continue to work in line with recording cases and reporting data.

### **Independence of role**

Freedom to Speak Up guardians must work independent of thought and always remain impartial. Impartiality contributes to a workplace culture of trust, with the aim of supporting organisations to create a culture where workers not only feel safe but have confidence in the speaking up process. Regardless of the employment model, whether a guardian is employed directly by the organisation or engaged through a third-party arrangement, there is always a financial or contractual relationship in place. However, it is essential that guardians are supported to act with impartiality, maintain their professional independence, and carry out their role without undue influence.

Any concerns regarding independence and impartiality, the conduct or performance of a guardian should be dealt with appropriately and in line with organisational performance management policies.

### **Guardian line management**

We strongly recommend that the guardian reports to a designated executive lead for Freedom to Speak Up ensuring direct support and oversight however, the general line management responsibilities sit with a different senior manager for purposes of signing off annual leave and appraisals. This helps mitigate any barriers in being able to constructively challenge at board level. In cases which may present a potential conflict of interest, the guardian should escalate concerns through their designated Non-Executive Director to maintain impartiality and integrity.

It is strongly advised that Freedom to Speak Up guardians do not line manage other guardians. This recommendation is based on the following:



## Potential challenges of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian line-managing other guardians

1. **Compromised independence** – A guardian should be impartial. Line management may create a power imbalance that may undermine trust and raise concerns about bias.
2. **Fear of retaliation** – Guardians may hesitate to challenge decisions or raise concerns about their manager, fearing career consequences.
3. **Role confusion** – Combining a support role with managerial duties may create confusion about whether concerns are handled fairly or influenced by hierarchy.
4. **Weakened Speak Up culture** – If guardians are seen as hierarchical figures, worker may feel less safe to raise concerns freely.
5. **Reduced psychological safety** – Guardians also need a safe avenue to speak up and all guardians must have access to the executive lead and non-executive director to escalate concerns or raise their own concerns.

## Recruitment and appointment

Whether a guardian is recruited directly by the organisation or via a third-party contract, the recruitment process must be open and transparent, and in line with local recruitment policies.

Careful consideration should be given to the following:

- Seniority of role - worker may not feel safe to raise concerns to very senior leaders.
- Potential conflicts of interest including but not limited to, serving board member, trustee, trade union representative.
- Line management of the role - a guardian managed by the organisation's human resources service may be a barrier to some workers speaking up
- Reporting lines and escalation routes both internally and externally to Board and senior leaders.

## NHS banding

To recognise the high level of work required, we have provided 2 example job descriptions at NHS Band 7 and 2 example job descriptions at Band 8a. Where organisations do not use NHS AfC Bandings, we would recommend banding the roles to the equivalent of Band 7/8a. We have also provided a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role specification. When recruiting new guardians, organisations should consider these documents as the minimum standard required and approved by the



National Guardian's Office. For organisations with a lead/deputy guardian model the Band 7 should be considered a minimum band for the deputy and the Band 8a a minimum standard for the lead.

### **Other organisations**

In organisations outside the NHS, consideration should be given to an equivalent level of role.

### **Implementation of role**

#### **Existing guardians**

For organisations with existing guardians, the planning and reflection tool should be completed by the executive lead for Freedom to Speak Up at a minimum of two-yearly intervals, or when provision needs to be reviewed. This guidance should be considered on the next scheduled review, or when changes to provision are required, whichever comes first.

#### **Initial / onward recruitment**

When recruiting in the future for additional, or replacement guardians, this guidance document must be followed.

## Annex A

### Key competencies required of all Freedom to Speak Up guardians

These competencies align with the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian development guide, (March 2023) which was developed to help guardians build upon their existing skills and experience. An online self-assessment tool is available for use with this development guide.

#### Communication

- Development and delivery of communication and engagement programmes.
- Sensitive and supportive engagement with individuals, particularly those who find it difficult to speak up.
- Able to engage with diverse audiences who may otherwise face barriers to speaking up.

#### Partnership building and relationship management

- Knowledge of responsibilities related to safety, quality, and governance held by teams and partners within and outside the organisation.

#### Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems

- Knowledge of local speaking up processes and sources of support and guidance, including escalation processes.
- Knowledge of wider Freedom to Speak Up developments, good practice, and guidance from National Guardian's Office.
- Knowledge of processes to escalate potential patient safety and quality issues.
- Knowledge of wider policy initiatives, and sources of additional support from other organisations, as well as those within individual organisations.

#### Driving continuous improvement

- Review and improve Freedom to Speak Up guidance and processes.
- Develop awareness of, and reflection on, own skills and abilities and training needs.
- Completion of National Guardian's Office annual refresher training.
- Use the guardian self-development guide.

#### Measuring effectiveness and impact

- Development of measures/indicators of local Freedom to Speak Up culture.

- Assessment of the effectiveness of Freedom to Speak Up processes and activities.
- Demonstration of the impact speaking up has.
- Ensuring all data is handled securely and in line with National Guardian's Office and organisational guidance, along with any relevant legal requirements.

#### **Time management and prioritisation**

- Development and support of a Freedom to Speak Up stakeholder network.
- Ability to manage/oversee multiple cases and own priorities.
- Develop and support a network of Freedom to Speak Up champions.

#### **Training and capability building**

- Assessment of the knowledge and capability of workers to speak up and to support others when they speak up.
- Taking action to ensure all workers have the skills and knowledge they need to enable them to speak up effectively, and to support others to do so.

#### **Working with senior leaders**

- Development of strong and open working relationships with senior leaders.
- Production and presentation of reports to help senior leaders understand Freedom to Speak Up culture.
- Holding senior leaders to account, challenging them, and supporting them in improvement [B1245 iii Freedom-to-speak-up-a-reflection-and-planning-tool.](#)



## Freedom to Speak Up Guardian – role specification

### Purpose of the role

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role was established to support and embed a speak up, listen up, and follow up culture across all NHS organisations. As set out by the National Guardian's Office, every NHS organisation in England, and those organisations who are subject to the NHS standard contract, are expected to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian to ensure that workers feel safe, supported, and confident in speaking up.

Freedom to Speak Up guardians are independent of thought, impartial, high-profile, and strategically positioned individuals within their organisation. They provide emotional support, expert advice, and structured guidance to workers who need to speak up.

Freedom to Speak Up guardians are expected to:

- Lead cultural change by ensuring that speaking up is embedded as a fundamental part of organisational learning, governance, and patient safety systems.
- Engage with the board and executive team, ensuring that leadership remains accountable and responsive to workers speaking up.
- Develop and maintain robust internal freedom to speak up systems that provide a clear, accessible, and effective route for workers to speak up.
- Work collaboratively across the organisation to promote a just and learning culture, ensuring that responses to speaking up prioritise learning and improvement rather than blame or retaliation.
- Collaborate with national and regional networks, sharing good practice and learning from others to continuously improve the effectiveness of the speaking up agenda.
- Support and empower workers by offering confidential guidance, signposting, and emotional support to those who speak up.
- Freedom to Speak Up guardians are not a replacement for managers, HR, or trade unions, but they act as an additional route, to ensure that speaking up is taken seriously throughout the organisation. They work closely with workers, leaders, regulators, and external partners to drive cultural transformation, ensuring that all workers feel safe, respected, and valued when they speak up.

Ultimately, the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is a visible, and influential figure who ensures that speaking up is not only encouraged but also acted upon, leading to a healthier and safer workplace for all.



## Main duties of the job

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian holds a critical position within the organisation, requiring a balance of strategic leadership, and frontline engagement. The role is highly visible and requires independent judgment, ethical leadership, and resilience in navigating sensitive and challenging situations. The guardian contributes to shaping organisational culture, ensuring that all workers, regardless of hierarchy, background, or role, are empowered to speak up safely - and without fear of detriment.

### Promoting a Speaking Up culture

- Lead organisation-wide initiatives to embed psychological safety, ensuring that speaking up is seen as a positive driver of improvement rather than a risk to individuals.
- Work with senior leadership and frontline workers to dismantle systemic and cultural barriers that hinder transparency and openness.
- Develop proactive strategies to reach underrepresented voices and ensure concerns from all levels of the workforce are heard and acted upon.
- Oversee the implementation and continuous evolution of speaking up policies, ensuring alignment with good practice and national guidance.

### Supporting workers compassionately

- Acting impartially to provide emotional support, expert and structured guidance to workers navigating speaking up processes.
- Manage highly sensitive and complex cases, often involving ethical dilemmas, interpersonal conflict, and patient safety concerns.
- Develop and implement clear feedback mechanisms, ensuring that workers feel heard, supported, and reassured that the cases they raise lead to meaningful action.
- Work with leaders and managers to promote Speak Up, Listen Up and Follow Up learning modules to enable them to effectively respond to workers speaking up while maintaining confidentiality and fairness.

### Collaborating with leadership to drive cultural change

- Work in close partnership with the board, chief executive, and senior leadership team to influence decision-making and ensure a just, learning-focused culture.

- Hold senior leaders accountable for fostering a proactive, transparent, and inclusive workplace, challenging them where necessary and supporting them in improvement efforts.
- Provide data-driven insights and analysis to inform board-level (or equivalent) discussions, presenting trends, case studies, and recommendations that shape organisational policies.
- Support the board to meet national regulatory and legal requirements, aligning with good practice guidance from the National Guardian's Office.

### Ensuring safety, quality, and organisational learning

- Work alongside governance, risk, and safety teams to ensure that speaking up cases translate into concrete improvements in patient care and worker wellbeing.
- Lead on the triangulation of data, identifying patterns and trends across workforce experience, patient safety incidents, and cultural assessments.
- Contribute to the development of a just and fair culture, ensuring that responses to speaking up are consistent, proportionate, and focused on learning and accountability rather than blame.

### Engagement beyond the organisation

- Actively participate in regional and national Freedom to Speak Up networks, ensuring that good practice is shared and continuously adopted.
- Develop a robust communications strategy to increase visibility, credibility, and accessibility of the guardian role across the organisation.
- Lead awareness campaigns, including Freedom to Speak Up Month, to strengthen engagement and confidence in speaking up processes.

### Key relationships

The Freedom to Speak Up guardian(s) will operate as an integral part of a wider team, ensuring that speaking up cases are assessed and prioritised in a timely manner, and embedded into the organisation's continuous improvement efforts. They will play a strategic and advisory role, working collaboratively across departments to ensure that speaking up directly informs organisational learning, patient safety strategies, and workforce wellbeing initiatives.

To achieve this, they must develop and sustain strong, trust-based relationships with a diverse range of internal and external stakeholders. Their role demands diplomatic engagement, high-level influencing skills, and the ability to navigate complex organisational dynamics. By fostering transparent and solution-focused dialogue, they will ensure that speaking up cases are not only heard but also acted upon in a



meaningful and constructive manner, driving measurable improvements in patient safety and worker experience.

### Knowledge and experience

In the medium to long term, all Freedom to Speak Up guardians should aim to develop the following knowledge and experience. While it is unlikely that an individual will possess all these attributes at the outset, organisations should appoint individuals who meet some of these criteria and are committed to further development. Work will be undertaken to determine the additional training and education required for Freedom to Speak Up guardians.

Freedom to Speak Up guardians should:

- Be educated to Master's level or have equivalent experience of working at a senior strategic level within an organisation.
- Have at least two years of experience in a role related to workforce culture, worker engagement, patient safety, governance, or organisational development, with an understanding of the principles that underpin speaking up and psychological safety.
- Have experience working within or alongside governance, quality, and safety structures, ensuring that speaking up cases raised through Freedom to Speak Up processes inform wider organisational learning and change.
- Have proven and significant leadership experience in influencing senior decision-makers, enabling cultural change, and ensuring that concerns raised are addressed effectively.
- Have knowledge and experience of embedding a just, open, and learning culture that enables workers to speak up without fear of retribution.
- Be committed to developing expertise in all aspects of cultural transformation and psychological safety, including human factors, systems thinking, workplace mediation, conflict resolution, organisational learning, restorative justice, and leadership accountability.
- Have a thorough understanding of the Freedom to Speak Up agenda, including national guidance and regulatory expectations, and be able to interpret and apply these within their organisation.
- Can develop and communicate a long-term vision for speaking up, translating this into actionable plans and measurable outcomes.
- Have knowledge of safeguarding and signpost to legal support where required in relation to worker protections and patient safety.
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of how inequalities, system bias, and discrimination affect workplace culture and people's willingness to speak up. Apply knowledge of the Equality Act 2010 to promote inclusive, equitable approaches that encourage open communication, recognising the importance

of collecting and analysing data on protected characteristics to identify trends, address disparities, and continuously improve the speaking up culture.

- Be able to build and maintain trusted relationships across all levels of an organisation, including senior leaders, board members, staff networks, trade unions, and external bodies.

While a clinical qualification or background in patient safety may be beneficial, it is not essential for a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

### Skills and attributes

Freedom to Speak Up guardians should have the following skills and attributes:

- Leadership and influence – Ability to challenge constructively, hold senior leaders to account, and advocate for cultural transformation.
- Emotional intelligence and empathy – strong ability to engage sensitively and impartially with workers who may be in distress, fear of retribution, or experiencing workplace conflict.
- Communication and engagement – Highly developed oral and written communication skills, including the ability to present complex and sensitive information to workers, board members, regulators, and external partners in a way that fosters trust and action.
- Strategic thinking – Ability to analyse complex concerns and themes, provide insightful recommendations, and develop strategic interventions to improve the speaking-up culture.
- Collaboration and networking – Ability to engage with national and regional freedom to speak up networks, sharing good practice and driving continuous improvement.
- Conflict resolution and mediation – Experience in navigating difficult conversations, resolving conflicts, and facilitating restorative approaches to address concerns.
- Data analysis and reporting – Ability to interpret patterns in speaking up data, triangulate findings with other workforce and patient safety metrics, and use insights to influence organisational policies and decisions.
- Project management and prioritisation – Ability to manage multiple complex cases, competing priorities, and sensitive information while ensuring timely and effective action.
- Personal resilience and self-awareness – Ability to manage the emotional demands of the role, develop coping strategies, and maintain personal well-being while supporting others.
- Commitment to learning and development – Willingness to undertake ongoing training in freedom to speak up, National Guardian’s Office annual refresher training, self-assessment against the guardian development guide, organisational learning, and psychological safety.



## Values and behaviours

Freedom to Speak Up guardians must adhere to the guardian values:

- Courage
- Impartiality
- Empathy
- Learning

In addition, guardians should also demonstrate the following:

- Commitment to transparency and integrity – Upholding the highest ethical standards, ensuring that speaking up processes are impartial, fair, and free from undue influence.
- Courage to challenge – Willingness to speak truth to power, hold senior leaders accountable, and challenge poor behaviours or resistance to change.
- Empowerment and inclusivity – Actively engaging underrepresented voices, ensuring that barriers to speaking up are dismantled and all workers feel safe to speak up.
- Collaboration and respect – Working in partnership with workers, leadership, and external bodies to foster a culture of trust and shared responsibility.
- Commitment to organisational learning – Ensuring that speaking up leads to meaningful improvements in both workplace culture and patient safety.
- Focus on equity and fairness – Recognising the impact of discrimination, power imbalances, and systemic inequalities, and championing just culture approaches in handling concerns.

## Learning and development

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role requires ongoing professional development to remain effective in a constantly evolving landscape. Training should align with guidance from the National Guardian's Office and cover key areas such as:

- Speaking up and psychological safety – Advanced training in creating and sustaining a culture where workers feel safe and supported to speak up.
- Ethics and just culture – Understanding moral, legal, and regulatory frameworks surrounding speaking up, public information disclosure act (PIDA), and worker wellbeing.
- Leadership and influence – Training on negotiation, influencing senior decision-makers, and engaging with board-level governance.
- Data-driven decision making – Learning how to interpret, analyse, and present speaking-up trends and workforce insights to drive improvement.



- Conflict resolution and restorative practices – Developing skills in mediation, de-escalation, and relationship rebuilding following concerns raised.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) – Strengthening understanding of bias, discrimination, and barriers faced by underrepresented groups, ensuring a fair and inclusive approach to speaking up

Guardians should regularly assess their competency levels utilising the [Freedom to Speak Up Guardian development guide](#) and [Self assessment – National Guardian’s Office](#).



## **Annex B**

### **Sample job descriptions**

[West Yorkshire ICB Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#)

[Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#)

[Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#)

[The Children's Trust Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#)