

# **Guidance for Freedom to Speak Up Guardians**

## Recording issues

## Introduction

This guidance has been drawn up to help Freedom to Speak Up Guardians (FTSUG) record issues raised by people speaking up in a way that will be helpful to them, and that will promote consistency across Trusts. Other than in general terms, it focuses on 'what' to record not 'how' this should be done. The National Guardian's Office (NGO) is likely to routinely request a number of the items so that it can properly oversee the work done by the FTSUG network – these have been indicated below. Other items listed are likely to be helpful to FTSUGs in keeping track of the issues they are handling, and looking for potential trends that might indicate barriers to a fully functioning 'FTSU culture'. The NGO would encourage FTSUGs to adopt this guidance as a minimum standard, adding to it as required according to local need.

This guidance has been tested with a number of FTSUGs.

## Confidentiality

When recording issues, the confidentiality of people speaking up should always be considered. Recording systems should be designed so that only the FTSUG has access to the information captured. Where there is a local FTSU network in operation, it should not be assumed that all information recorded can be shared across the network – there may be good reasons why information offered to one member of the network should not be shared with other members of the network. Recording systems will need to accommodate these confidentiality requirements.

Item	Required routinely by NGO	Notes
<b>Numbers of issues raised</b>	Yes	FTSUGs will want to record the number of issues raised to them. If a number of people raise the same issue, each person raising the issue should be counted as a separate 'item'. This is because, once a matter is closed, FTSUGs will want feedback from each individual about how the matter was dealt with. At this stage, we do not expect FTSUGs to record issues raised elsewhere in their organisation. However, depending on local need, they may wish to quantify this information when reporting to their Board.
<b>Numbers of issues raised anonymously</b>	Yes	The number of issues raised anonymously (as opposed to confidentially or openly) may indicate the degree of trust that people speaking up have in their organisation.
<b>Other factors related to people raising concerns</b>	No <i>[Though the NGO may wish to,</i>	It may be helpful for FTSUGs to record a number of items of information about people who raise concerns so that they can spot patterns or trends in their organisation. The

	<b><i>periodically, carry out a 'deep dive']</i></b>	<p>NGO would expect that the following items would be helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department</li> <li>• Profession</li> <li>• Position</li> <li>• Length of time in the Trust</li> <li>• Length of time in post</li> </ul> <p>FTSUGs will also want to ascertain other information about people who raise concerns (age, ethnicity, working pattern etc) however, the NGO would advise that this is not recorded as part of the initial speaking up process and is collected at some other point (e.g. as part of a feedback survey of people raising concerns).</p>
<b>Nature of the issue</b>	No <b><i>[Though the NGO may wish to, periodically, carry out a 'deep dive']</i></b>	<p>Each issue will be unique and FTSUGs are likely to want to record a brief summary as part of their recording system. Open questions such as 'how long has this been happening?', 'why are you raising this now?', 'who else knows about this?' will help you understand the context and potential urgency of the issue. In addition, it would be helpful to categorise each issue systematically, accepting that several categories may need to be applied to each individual 'case'. Typical categories may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Safety / Quality</li> <li>• Staff Safety</li> <li>• Behavioural / Relationship</li> <li>• Bullying / Harassment</li> <li>• System / Process</li> <li>• Infrastructure / Environmental</li> <li>• Cultural</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Senior management issue</li> <li>• Middle management issue</li> </ul>
<b>Has the issue been raised previously</b>	No	May be an indicator of issues with existing systems not satisfying people who are speaking up and / or of effective action not being taken when issues have been raised
<b>Outcome the person speaking up wishes to see</b>	No	May provide useful guidance on next steps or potential solutions to the issue. Irrespective of the outcome desired by the person speaking up, FTSUGs will want to ensure that all aspects of the issue are looked into, as appropriate.
<b>Action</b>	No	FTSUGs will want to record the action that is taken when an issue is raised. This will include details of who any issue is referred to, when it is referred etc. FTSUGs may want to

		categorise actions in some way, for instance by developing a standard list of which parts of the organisation issues are raised with.
<b>Outside referral</b>	Yes	The number of cases that are referred outside the organisation for investigation is a useful indicator of both the seriousness of issues being raised, and how open an organisation is to external scrutiny and transparency.
<b>Update</b>	No	It will be helpful to agree and record when an update on progress can be expected, or needs to be obtained
<b>Open / closed</b>	Yes	The number of cases that are open or closed at any one time may be used as an indicator of how quickly cases are resolved and, potentially, the complexity of the cases being handled. A case should not be closed until it has reached a point where the FTSUG feels that all possible routes have been reasonably pursued, including all avenues of dispute. In some circumstances, someone speaking up may decide to 'drop out' of the process – however, the FTSUG will want to ensure that any action taken in response to an issue reaches an appropriate conclusion before the issue is closed
<b>Feedback</b>	Yes	Feedback should be obtained at the point at which a case is closed, even if the person speaking up may be unhappy with the outcome. All FTSUGs should ask everyone raising an issue the following question: <b><i>“Given your experience, would you speak up again?”</i></b> Options for response: <b><i>“Yes / No / Maybe / Don’t know”</i></b> This should be supplemented with the follow-up question: <b><i>“Please explain your response”</i></b> FTSUGs will find it helpful to categorise the information provided in the supplementary question so that they can look for themes.  Seeking feedback will also be a useful opportunity to record the demographics and other characteristics of people who are speaking up. The NHS Staff Survey provides a useful template for obtaining information on demographics and we expect that, as a minimum, FTSUGs would seek information on gender, age, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion and disability.

<b>Learning</b>	No <i>[Though the NGO may wish to, periodically, carry out a 'deep dive']</i>	It will be helpful to record the learning points that arise out of each case. Where possible, it may be useful to theme the learning points so that common themes can be fed back to, and targeted action taken by, the Board
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