

Meeting title:	Trust Board (Public) Public Trust Board paper J
Date of the meeting:	May 11 2023
Title:	Freedom To Speak Up Annual Report Highlights 2022-2023
Report presented by:	Becky Cassidy – Director of Corporate and Legal Affairs and Edel Concannon- Freedom To Speak Up Guardian
Report written by:	Jo Dawson and Edel Concannon – Freedom to Speak Up Guardians

Action – this paper is for:	Decision/Approval	x	Assurance	x	Update	
Where this report has been discussed previously	This report was presented at the People and Culture Committee on March 30 2023.					

To your knowledge, does the report provide assurance or mitigate any significant risks? If yes, please detail which
NA

Impact Assessment	
Patients	Potential negative impact on patient care if staff are not encouraged to report safety issues.
Workforce	Potential negative impact on staff motivation, morale and wellbeing if staff feel unsupported in speaking up or unheard
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Impact on inclusion in relation to staff voice
Services	Potential negative impact on service provision if staff feel unsupported in reporting safety concerns
Finance	Potential financial impact of not retaining staff
Reputation/legal	Reputational damage

Acronyms used:	
F2SU – Freedom to Speak Up	H&W – Health and Wellbeing
F2SUG – Freedom to Speak Up Guardian	NSS – National Staff Survey
COO- Chief Operating Officer	CN- Chief Nurse
OD - Organisational Development	
EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
NGO- National Guardian Office	

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the Trust Board on Freedom to Speak Up activity and provide assurance on the progress of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Service during 2022/23.

Recommendation

The Trust Board is asked to-

- To note and approve the contents of the F2SU Annual Report 2022/23 (Appendix 1)
- To be assured of the ongoing progress of the F2SUG Service in fulfilling its annual priorities and the continuous improvement of the F2SU offer at UHL.

Summary

This report highlights the F2SU activity for 2022/23 across the UHL and Alliance sites. The service initially saw a reduction in reporting in the last quarter which aligns with reporting numbers across the East Midlands. There was no clear explanation for the reduction, but the East Midlands Guardians believed it is attributed to NHS arrangements for the winter surge. However, at the end of March, the service saw an unexpected increase of concerns raised. The F2SUGs are confident that this has been a positive year for the visibility of F2SU at both an executive and front-line level. This is largely due to improvements in governance arrangements and the gradual emergence from the covid pandemic restrictions.

This year, the Guardians were able to return to face-to-face training and visits to wards and departments as well as taking part in special events such as the Administration and Clerical Listening events; the UHL Research and Innovation Conference and the first Celebration of our UHL International Nurses events.

F2SUGs have continued to promote speaking up and the four mechanisms through ward walks, poster distribution, the Freedom to Speak Up Month activities and Here for You events. Staff have unreservedly supported the variety of mechanisms available, reporting that these are a signifier of inclusion and organisational understanding of the different access needs of our workforce.

Freedom to Speak Up Activity 2022/23

Using the four internal reporting mechanisms, staff raised 233 individual concerns which were managed by the F2SUG Service.

Number of Concerns Raised 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Reporting Mechanism	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Freedom to Speak Up	17	15	14	18	12	8	16	11	10	16	12	22	171
Junior Doctor Gripe	3	1	4	4	6	2	3	3	2	2	2	5	37
Staff (3636) concerns	0	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	15
Your BAME Voice	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	10
Total	25	17	21	24	19	12	20	18	16	18	16	27	223

Direct staff contact with the F2SUGs remains the most popular reporting mechanism. Staff have fed back that one-to-one contact helps build their confidence and provides the necessary support and assurances that they can speak up. However, the F2SUG Service is aware, through their work with Staff Networks that speaking up is a riskier undertaking for staff because of their lack of seniority; promotion prospects or protected characteristics. Detriment remains an important consideration for staff and the CN stated that staff often cited detriment as a barrier to speaking up. The F2SUG responded that there had been only one recorded incident of detriment after speaking up to a F2SUG in 2022/23. However, staff consistently reported incidents of detriment when speaking up in their teams or departments.

People Committee enquired as to how F2SU was monitoring who was speaking up to the service and the F2SUG explained that the service had introduced EDI monitoring to capture demographic data for individuals (including protected characteristics) raising concerns. This information is obtained via the UHL EDI Monitoring form; an optional data capture tool. To date, the service has received 12 responses, the F2SUGs will continue to promote the importance of this data collection to create a more inclusive and bespoke service.

Persistent Themes:

Freedom to Speak Up, 3636 and Your Voice combined 22/23

Themes	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total
Bullying and Harassment	5	1	4	0	10
Inappropriate Attitudes & Behaviours	14	9	8	17	46
Patient Safety/Quality	8	7	9	12	36
Policies, Procedures & Processes	10	10	4	4	28
Signposting Only	0	0	0	4	4
Worker safety/wellbeing	18	16	21	15	64
Total	55	43	46	52	196

Junior Doctor Gripe Reporting Tool

Themes	Total *
Appliance Availability	1
Equipment and ward environment	8
Excessive workload	1
Inconsistent work practices	1
IT issues	8
Lack of staffing resources	10
Quality and safety of care	3
Staffing numbers; skills level mix	1
Teamwork and communication	4
Total:	37

Inappropriate attitudes and behaviours and worker wellbeing have featured heavily in the concerns raised by staff using the 3636, F2SU and Your Voice mechanisms. In response, The F2SUG Service created the F2SU & Civility & Respect training for staff. The F2SU Service has delivered 87 sessions this year and the feedback has been exceptionally positive with staff keen to discuss and reflect upon the impact of incivility on the quality of patient care and staff wellbeing. Junior doctors have raised concerns about working environments and IT issues as well as staff resources. CMGs have responded positively, for example, in CHUGGS plans are in place for the provision of a doctors' office and new IT equipment. Clinical Directors and the Medical Education team have met with their FY1 and FY2s to assess the impact of low staff resources on wellbeing and the progress of medical training as well as patient safety and quality care.

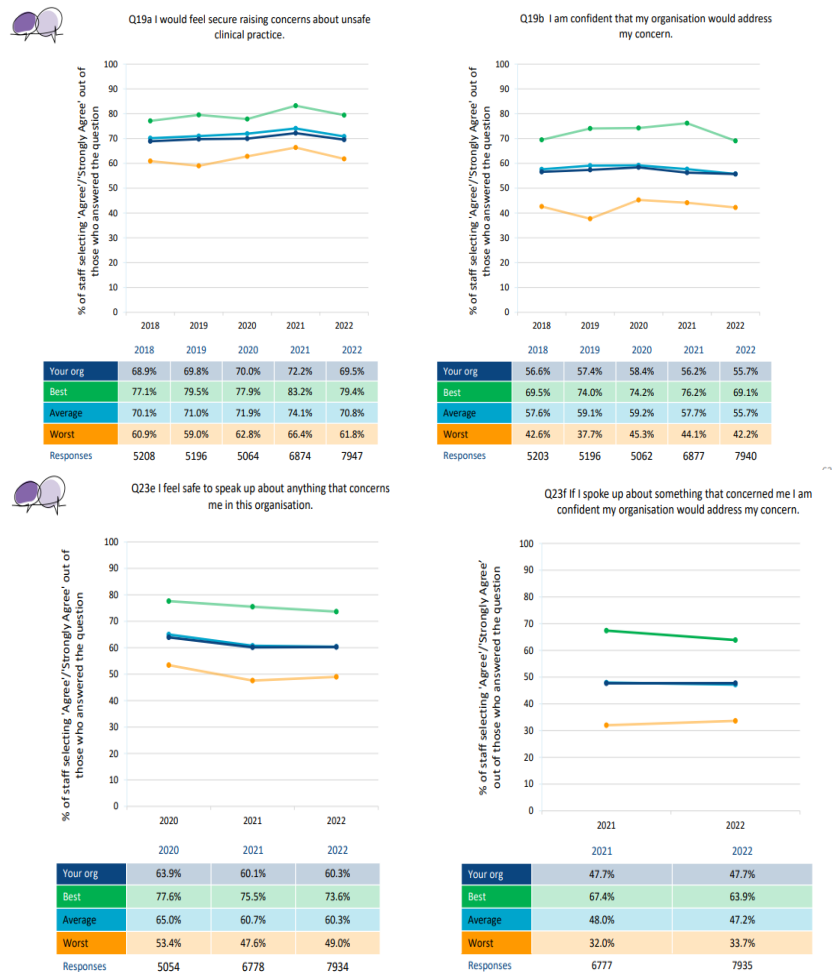
Impact of changes to F2SU governance activity:

Improvements to the governance process for FTSU, has had a positive impact upon the visibility and elevation of speaking up at UHL. F2SUGs now deliver their quarterly reports in person, to both the People and Culture Committee and the Trust Board. This allows the F2SUGs to share the themes of concerns as well as raise any issues about barriers to speaking up or areas of concern. Appreciative inquiry by the Committee members and the Trust Board ensures that discussions are both constructive and generative and F2SUGs feel confident that they have been heard.

There are no concerns over the support provided to the Guardians over this reporting period. F2SUGs continue to have monthly meetings with the CEO who remains responsive to the themes raised. He has met with a number of staff to thank them and discuss their experience of speaking up. Staff have fed back that they have been reassured that speaking up is a positive undertaking at UHL. The F2SUGs continue to meet with their Non-Executive Lead who provides support and time to discuss matters of concern to the Guardians. The monthly meetings offer a safe space to explore issues such as staff wellbeing and inclusion as well as service resourcing and progress of the F2SUG work plan.

The NHS National Staff Survey 2022

This year, the F2SUGs attended a number of promotional activities with the H&W team to encourage colleagues to complete the NHS NSS. The 2022 survey asked staff about their perception of feeling encouraged, knowledgeable and secure enough to speak up in their organisation.



Whilst it is disappointing to see a reduction in the percentage of staff who feel they can speak up about clinical concerns; this is in line with the overall reduction in confidence across the NHS. This also correlates with the decrease in raising concerns at UHL which has been discussed earlier in this report. Benchmarking against the best organisations, the F2SUGs acknowledge there must be sustained improvements if we are to deliver our goal of providing the best F2SU service in the NHS.

As regards speaking up in general, our UHL staff response is broadly consistent with 2021 results and we have not experienced the decrease in staff confidence witnessed across the NHS this year. This is encouraging but there remains much work to be done to build staff confidence in speaking up and positive organisational responses to concerns.

Resourcing the Freedom to Speak Up Service

The F2SUGs were interviewed by CQC inspectors as part of the ‘well led’ inspection in September 2022. The inspectors spoke with the F2SUGs about resourcing and their capacity to increase the number of concerns raised at UHL. In their report in November 2022, the CQC inspectors highlighted the need for additional F2SUGs to deliver UHL ambitions. The F2SUGs agree that expansion of the service is necessary to improve the speaking up culture at UHL and the Alliance. F2SUG’s are awaiting on the outcome of the business case, submitted in January 2023 and look forward to introducing F2SU champions in 2023. The champions will support the important promotion of speaking up and listening at a local level and assist the F2SUGs in building awareness and confidence in the F2SU process (F2SUG Priority One). The People Committee agreed that the number of staff speaking up at UHL was not sufficient and asked when the business case decision was due. It was confirmed that the outcome was imminent.

Data Triangulation and Proactive Support

As speaking up activity is a clear indication of a safety culture, the F2SUGs are mindful of which CMGs/Directorates are generating concerns and responding positively to the issues raised. Equally, it reviews where there are fewer speaking up instances to see where F2SU support would be helpful. For example; the Junior Doctor Gripe reporting tool and the National NHS Staff Survey results 2022, highlight equipment and IT as areas of concern for staff and we know through the Admin and Clerical Listening Events that IM & T are a highly sought after and pressured department. Yet in 2022/23, there has only been 1 concern emanating from this area. Areas such as this might indicate a lack of confidence in the process or conversely, a robust local speaking up culture which does not require recourse to the F2SUG escalation process.

To date, the F2SUGs have been unable to dedicate resources consistently towards the assessment of low reporting areas. The People Committee enquired how the F2SUGs proposed the service might take this work forward. The F2SUGs will liaise with the COO and his team to explore how F2SU can be embedded more consistently and systemically across CMGs and Directorates.

The CN asked whether F2SUGs had contact with the universities as students and trainees were the fresh eyes of the organisation. The F2SUG responded that they were not yet involved with the universities/training providers but that students/trainees were a vulnerable F2SU group and that this was highlighted on the F2SUG work plan. The F2SUGs have subsequently received the contact details for the course conveners, and we will request a F2SU session as part of the professional capabilities teaching content.

Looking to the Future

In addition to the improvements considered elsewhere in this report, the F2SUGs’ ambitions are to:-

- Develop a robust F2SU communications plan to support the 3 priorities; promote internal mechanisms to aide staff to raise concerns and celebrate good news stories/improvements
- Deliver the recruitment, training, and supervision of UHL F2SU Champions across CMGs and Directorates
- Update the Freedom to Speak up/Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy in line with NHSE guidance

Supporting documentation: Appendix 1: F2SUG Annual Highlights Report 2022/23.

Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report 2022/2023

It has been five years since the role of Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (F2SUG) was introduced at UHL and it continues to evolve and develop in response to ever changing challenges and the needs and expectations of our NHS colleagues. When first launched, the purpose of the Guardian role was to receive and escalate concerns over patient safety. The global pandemic expanded that responsibility to worker wellbeing and most recently, our remit has moved to 'whatever gets in the way of doing your job well'. This has broadened the scope and themes of concerns reaching the F2SUG Service and being a pivotal ethos, it sits comfortably within the wider remits of patient safety; worker health and wellbeing; equality, diversity, and inclusion; quality improvement and staff engagement.

As such, it provides the F2SUGs with numerous opportunities to collaborate across a number of departments at UHL to consolidate key messages about worker wellbeing, inclusion, building a just and safety culture and the importance of civility and respect in the work place.

This Annual Report will provide insights into the work and achievements of the F2SUG Service in the last year as well as some of the challenges it has faced.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and invite you to contact the Guardians to discuss any area of interest or opportunities to work together to support our mission of making speaking up, business as usual at UHL.

Jo Dawson

Edel Concannon

UHL Freedom to Speak Up Guardians

Speaking Up Data 2022/23

Number of Concerns Raised 1st April to 31st March 2023

Reporting Mechanism	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Freedom to Speak Up	17	15	14	18	12	8	16	11	10	16	12	22	171
Junior Doctor Gripe	3	1	4	4	6	2	3	3	2	2	2	5	37
Staff (3636) concerns	0	1	3	2	1	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	15
Your BAME Voice	5	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	10
Total	25	17	21	24	19	12	20	18	16	18	16	27	233

Comparison with 2021/2022 F2SU Data:

Reporting Mechanisms	2021/22	2022/23	21/22 to 22/23
Freedom to Speak Up	170	171	0.5%
Junior Doctor Gripe	47	37	-21%
Staff (3636) concerns	13	15	13%
Your Voice	1	10	90%
Total	231	233	0.8%

- 0.8 % increase on number of concerns raised in 22/23 compared to 21/22.
- The greatest increase was seen in Your Voice (90%) however these figures remain low, and the new F2SU Comms plan will feature the promotion of this tool throughout the coming year.
- The largest decrease was seen in Junior Doctor Gripe reporting (-21%). This may be attributed to the JD Inductions which have only just returned to face to face.

The F2SUGs will take part in future JD Induction sessions this year and look forward to promoting the mechanism's and some of the successful outcomes because of speaking up. The service will continue to work with the Doctors in Training Committee to ensure that the mechanism meets the needs of its users and we are confident that these measures will increase the reporting numbers in 2024.

Themes of Concerns 2022/2023

Themes	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
Bullying and Harassment	5	1	4	0
Inappropriate Attitudes and Behaviours	14	9	8	15
Patient Safety/Quality	8	7	9	9
Policies, Procedures and Processes	10	10	4	4
Signposting Only	0	0	0	2
Worker safety/wellbeing	18	16	21	7
Total	55	43	46	37

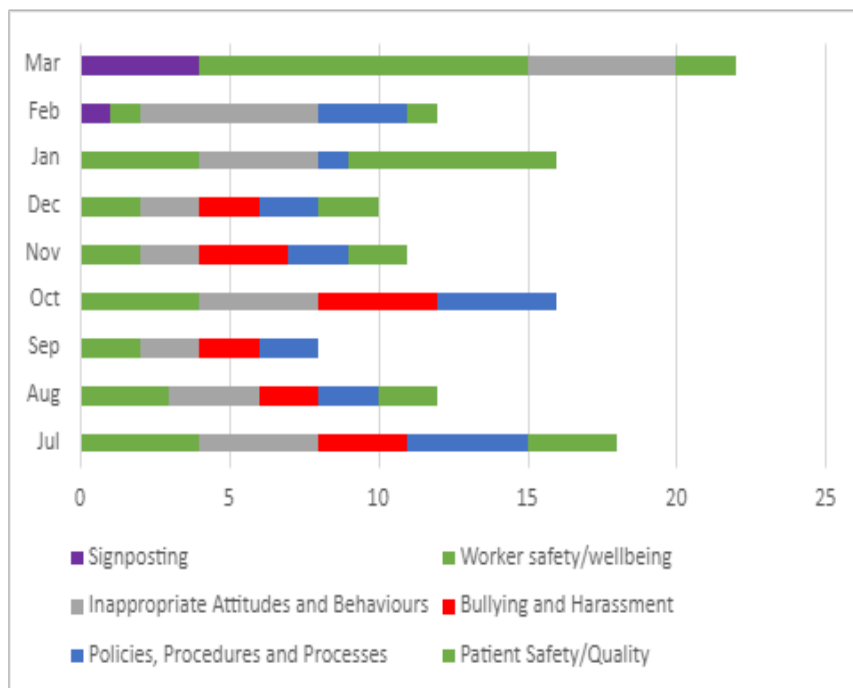
Inappropriate Attitudes and Behaviours and worker wellbeing have featured heavily this year. In response, the F2SUGs delivered 87 sessions on F2SU and Civility & Respect. The sessions have been overwhelmingly received and staff feedback has indicated that staff are now more aware of the casual links between disrespectful behaviour and poor patient care; the frequency of errors and poor staff morale.

The number of concerns over processes decreased throughout the year and the F2SUGs attribute this to the improvements made to transactional services.

Worker safety and wellbeing is largely concerned with excessive workload and stress of work and safer working.

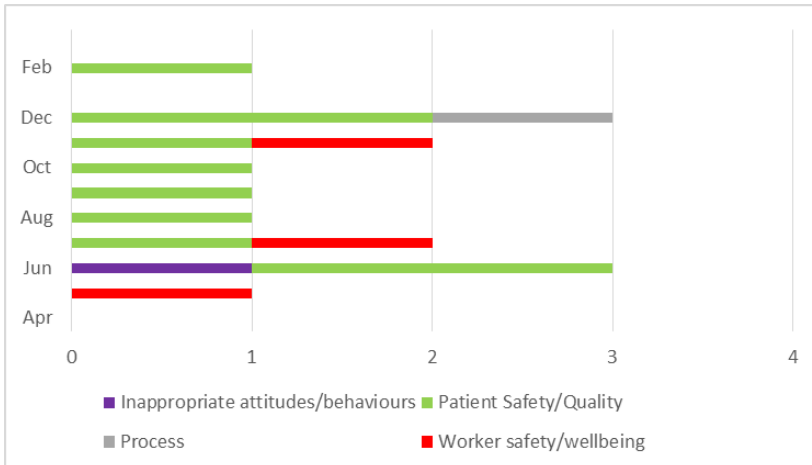
Note: These figures do not include JD Grips which are discussed further on in the report.

Concerns raised with the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians: April 2022 to March 2023



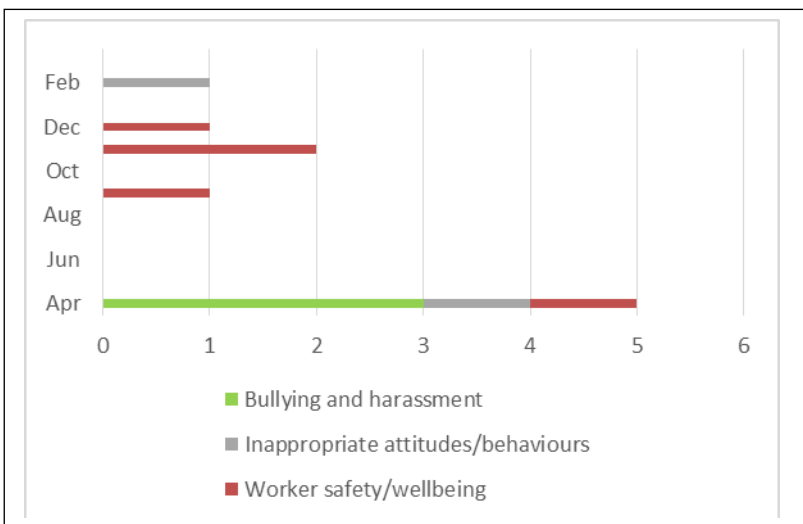
The majority of concerns were raised through the F2SUGs; Staff cite having someone to talk with and to listen as well as relationship building were key factors in choosing to contact the F2SUGs. Inappropriate behaviours and worker wellbeing/safety featured significantly in themes raised with the F2SUGs. To note the service saw an increase of concerns in March.

Concerns Raised via 13636 (Voice message and online form) April 2022 to March 2023



Patient Safety concerns make up 65% of contacts made via the 13636 staff reporting line & INsite form. There was a slight increase with reporting on the 13636 this year with staff using the mechanism to report issues with HR policies and processes as well as lack of staffing resources and concerns in June about working in extreme temperatures.

Your Voice BAME (online form) April 2022 to March 2023



This mechanism continues to experience low reporting levels which is attributed to challenges with promoting Your Voice. This will be addressed in the forthcoming Freedom to Speak Up communications plan. Of significance is that these concerns are about poor treatment by colleagues; bullying and harassment including of incidents racism and the impact/ treatment upon staff.

Junior Doctor Gripe Reporting Tool (online form) April 2022 to March 2023

Junior Doctor Gripes received in 2022/23	%	Total *
Appliance Availability	3%	1
Equipment and ward environment	22%	8
Excessive workload	3%	1
Inconsistent work practices	3%	1
IT issues	22%	8
Lack of staffing resources	24%	9
Quality and safety of care	11%	4
Staffing numbers; skills level mix	3%	1
Teamwork and communication	11%	4
Total:	100%	37

Junior Doctor Gripes account for over 20% of all the concerns raised this year. Over 50% of these gripes were about equipment, IT and environment, with a number of doctors expressing frustration with the lack of computers and dedicated space for doctors to work on wards. These matters resonated with our UHL NHS Staff Survey results 2022, and the organisation has made this issue an important priority. It has created the UHL Promise: RISE to ensure that staff are equipped to do their job well.

Concerns have also been raised about lack of staff resources which impacts upon patient care and staff wellbeing. These concerns have been responded to by Clinical Directors and the Medical Education Team to explore alternative staffing, the progress of training pathways and the wellbeing of doctors.

Number of Concerns Raised by CMGs/Directorates: April 2022 to March 2023

Summary table for CMGs	Freedom to Speak Up	Junior Doctor Gripe	Staff (3636 Staff Concerns)	Your Voice	Total
CMG 1 - Cancer, Haematology, Urology, Gastroenterology and Surgery (CHUGGS)	12	12	2	1	27
CMG 2 - Renal, Respiratory, Cardiac and Vascular (RRCV)	19	4	1	2	26
CMG 3 - Emergency and Specialist Medicine (ESM)	27	11	4	0	42
CMG 4 - Intensive Care, Theatres, Anaesthesia, Pain Management and Sleep (ITAPS)	5	2	2	1	10
CMG 5 - Musculoskeletal and Specialist Surgery (MSK and SS)	7	2	1	0	10
CMG 6 - Clinical Support and Imaging (CSI)	40	0	1	6	47
CMG 6 - The Alliance	2	0	0	0	2
CMG 7 - Women's and Children's (W&C)	15	0	1	0	16
Communications	1	0	0	0	1
Corporate and Legal Affairs (Claims and Inquests)	1	0	0	0	1
Corporate Medical	4	2	0	0	6
Estates and Facilities	11		1	0	14
Finance and Procurement	5	0	0	0	5
Transformation	1	0	0	0	1
Human Resources	5	0	0	0	5
Corporate Nursing	4	0	1	0	5
Information Management and Technology	1	0	0	0	3
Operations (Corporate)	3	0	1	0	4
Research and Innovation	8	0	0	0	8
Trust Wide	0	2	0	0	0
Unknown	0	2	0	0	0
Total	171	37	15	10	233

Open/Confidential/Anonymous concerns

All records	2022/23
Anonymous	45
Confidential	86
Open	102
Total	233

The service has seen an increase of confidential concerns, this will be monitored in the next financial year. 56% of concerns raised were either anonymous or confidential. This tells us the Trust has some way to go in addressing staff fear of detriment. To note this has been noted as a common theme within the Region too.

Fulfilling the Freedom to Speak Up Priorities:

In October 2022, the F2SUGs took the decision to postpone the publication of their F2SU Strategy to concentrate instead on an Annual Work Plan which would work to the three key priorities of the F2SUG Service. The table below provides some examples of key F2SU activities within the Trust in the last 12 months.

Priority One: Raising Awareness and Building Confidence

F2SU Activity	Frequency
<p>F2SU and Civility & Respect Training & Awareness including: Essential to role training; Inductions HCAs; Newly Qualified Midwives; Team Study days; Time Out days and Transition to Preceptorship training.</p>	<p>87 sessions delivered online or face to face; Overwhelming positive feedback</p>
<p>F2SU Drop in sessions on request; unstructured sessions for staff to record concerns about patient safety, environment, staff wellbeing, processes etc.. Production of F2SU report with key themes; staff QI suggestions; F2SU recommendations. Action plan to address key concerns created locally & progress monitored by F2SUGs.</p>	<p>19 conducted face to face – Each Drop-in session 3- 6hrs + including evening and weekend sessions.</p>
<p>Friday Focus Feature for F2SU Month in Oct 2022; discussing the importance of speaking up for organisational health and Guardian support for colleagues who speak up.</p>	<p>1 Friday Focus (2nd appearance)</p>
<p>‘ Here for You’ events working with our UHL Chaplaincy colleagues and the LPT F2SU Guardians: visiting staff at the LRI, Glenfield, Leicester General, Melton Mowbray Community Hospital; Ashton Care Home, Bridge Park Plaza Offices; St Luke’s; Loughborough Hospital; Hinckley & Bosworth Community Hospital.</p>	<p>10 with additional visits planned throughout 2023-2024</p>
<p>Delivery of MSc Patient Safety lecture on speaking up and Duty of Candour with Head of Patient Safety</p>	<p>1 morning session at University of Leicester generating additional F2SU workshop with LLR LMC and LLRPCL</p>
<p>Presentation at UHL Research and Innovation Conference 2023: short afternoon session to promote the benefits and importance of speaking up in teams.</p>	<p>1 session to promote the service and training opportunities generating 1 new contact and additional requests for training entire department.</p>
<p>Presentation at first International Nurses Celebration: Opportunity to promote F2SU and raising concerns with international nursing colleagues and join in with the celebration of their work and contribution to UHL.</p>	<p>1 evening presentation and a promotion stall celebrating speaking up and EDI at UHL prompting review of F2SU sessions to be more culturally aware</p>

Presentation with NHS England: Civility and Respect training completed with the F2SUGs at NHSE.	1 session completed to promote the importance of Civility and the impact incivility can have on patient safety
GMC: As part of the Speaking up Month F2SUG completed a pre-recorded session sharing the role as a F2SUG in an Acute Trust	1 session completed as part of speaking up month

Priority Two: Active Engagement with Senior Leadership to cultivate an open and responsive F2SU culture

The changes to the Executive Board at UHL in 2021/22, provided a timely opportunity to review F2SU governance and to strengthen reporting to UHL People and Culture Committee and Trust Board. The introduction of our new Executive leads also prompted useful introductory meetings to discuss the importance of speaking up and how each lead would support the ethos in their areas of responsibility. Examples of some of the work we have undertaken to actively engage with our Senior Leadership are set out below:

Activity	Impact
F2SUG Service move to Corporate and Legal Affairs	Emphasises independence of F2SUG role and improved access to Executive Board, building cooperative working relationships and elevating the ethos of F2SU across the organisation
Monthly meetings with Non-Exec Lead	Safe space for F2SUGs to discuss service offer; share themes and increased focus on vulnerable groups and staff wellbeing at UHL
Monthly meetings with CEO	To explore persistent themes and Exec response; assurance that Senior Execs have understanding of realities facing staff & action (short/medium/long term) will be taken to address issues. Progress against F2SU action plan reviewed to maintain focus.
Alignment of data recording with NGO Guidance March 2022	One system to record concerns which satisfies both UHL and NGO data submission requests; increased granular data capture for future development of triangulation of UHL data sets
Reporting to People and Culture Committee and delivery of Trust Board Report in person	Contributions made to wider NHS People Promise. Appreciative challenge and enquiry by Trust Board members about F2SU impact and barriers to speaking up. Signposting by board members to comparable trusts for advice on improvements to F2SU Service.

Benchmarking and Analysis of National Staff Survey Results 2022/2023	Ongoing activity to identify data relationships and interpretation of results to inform review of F2SU priorities.
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Priority Three: Integration of F2SU ethos and processes into operational strategies and decision making;

Delivering this priority has proved more challenging as it requires a more co-ordinated alignment with our UHL organisational transformation work. As such, the work remains in the early stages of delivery and demands a broader collaboration with other UHL services including People Services, EDI, Staff Engagement, Organisational Development and Learning and Development. We have, none the less, made tentative steps in working across other disciplines to encourage the integration of the speaking up into our everyday operations and decision making.

Activity	Output and Outcomes
Member of the Shared Decision-Making Leadership Council	Further understanding of staff concerns and empowerment to promote improvements; assistance from F2SUGs with barriers to implementing change. Involvement of F2SUG Service in Standard 3 (Safety) of the Pathway to Excellence Assessment working with the Patient Safety Lead for UHL.
Active Participation in the Administration and Clerical Listening events led by COO and Staff Engagement (x4 sessions)	Facilitating team talks and recording of themes and issues; contribution to final A & C report and F2SU suggestions for improvements; some of which were adopted by F2SU; e.g: back room staff never saw leadership or support services- F2SU targeted visits to post rooms, Porters area, Medical records.
Programme of Staff development for Estates and Facilities staff	Currently in development with EDI and E & F staff and Head of sustainability. Improved working relationships with E & F Leadership and management & access to E & F staff.
Working with Doctors in Training Committee chair and vice chair to promote the Junior Doctor Gripe tool	Liaison with Vice chair who promoted the JD Gripe Tool and F2SU to 500 medical staff. Future plans to work with Committee to promote JD Reporting Tool as Quality Improvement – evidence of activity.
Working with Clinical Education Fellows to review the efficacy of the Junior Doctor Gripe tool providing data and advice	Awaiting outcome of review and recommendations
F2SU Membership of the UHL Hidden	Attending 4 sessions to discuss access to support and advice and information about hidden

Disabilities Working Group	disabilities and organisational change.
Members of the Your Voice Network Meeting	Attendance at 3 meetings this year. Presentations provided for members on accessing speaking up and the Your Voice Reporting Tool. Prompted F2SUGs to attend training on supporting BAME and minority staff in the workplace delivered by NGO.
Members of the Just and Restorative working group	Advising group on staff F2SU concerns around the implementation of policies including data capture. Contributing to ongoing improvements to HR casework and implementation of patient safety II framework
Development of F2SU knowledge and training in Nursing Preceptorship curriculum	To provide more interactive for new nurses including our international nursing colleagues.
Meetings with Director of Communication & Engagement	Development of F2SU content strategy to promote speaking up and the determinants of speaking up; aligning with UHL RISE and cultural change.

Expanding the F2SUG Service for Today and the Future

As the role and remit of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian increases, a review of staff resourcing, and the service implementation model has been discussed with both the Executive and Non-Executive Leads. It was acknowledged that the current provision was not sufficient to deliver the operational and strategic goals of the service. As part of the CQC ‘well led’ inspection, the F2SUGs were interviewed by the inspectors where they explored the capacity of the F2SUGs to work with 17,000 staff and deliver all the elements of the action plan. Despite over 239 concerns raised last year, it was agreed that more could be achieved with additional staff resourcing. These observations were included in the CQC Report November 2023, and the trust has responded positively.





A business case for an additional full time F2SUG has been submitted and we await the outcome with optimism. The F2SUGs continue to plan for the delivery of F2SU Champions at UHL who will promote the F2SU service and support staff to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity. It is envisaged that we will recruit and train a small number of staff in the first instance with Champion capacity increasing over time.

Freedom to Speak Up – Making a difference at UHL:

You Said	We Responded
Change in working environment (site move) led to some staff no longer practising particular duties and worry about being de-skilled if called upon in an emergency to cover	Staff focus groups carried out to assess concerns and worries since moving to a different site. E- training available for certain duties. Review of risk assessment re: move of services to different site; mentor and support groups assigned to build confidence; all additional training requests treated favourably.
Air conditioning in room broken. Report made and no feedback forthcoming. Concerns over cancelling patients.	Escalated to HOPPS and Director of E&F. Matter already in hand and condenser part ordered. Part received & improved communication between E&F and HOPPS/GM and staff.
Use of staff & family members for translation/interpretation for patients.	Initially resolved at local level by ward sister. Later referred to EDI team when 2 nd concern received. Staff who raised concerns invited by EDI team to join focus group to review the UHL Translation and Interpretation policy and services.
Staff member concerned over lack of diversity in leadership and access to development opportunities	Staff member signposted to NHS leadership Academy and BAME programme connected with representatives from the BAME SDMC
Loss of functionality with introduction of Microsoft 365 causing serious delays to working processes and complaints from patients	Escalated to Change Lead for investigation. Department provided with appropriate number of Microsoft 365 desk top versions to resume work processes satisfactorily.

Updates from the National Guardian office:-

There has been a number of key reports published from the NGO this year.

-  [National Guardian’s Office Annual Report 2021- 2022](#)
-  Recommendations to update local F2SU Policy to be aligned to NHS ENGLAND Policy by January 2024
-  Undertake the [Freedom to Speak up A reflection and planning tool](#) and complete an action plan on the findings
-  [Freedom to Speak up: A guide for leaders in the NHS and organisations delivering NHS service](#)

Any further publications can be found on the NGO website: [The National Guardian's Office - Freedom to Speak Up](#)

“Over 20,000 cases have been brought to them last year, remaining at the record level set in 2020/21 (20,362, compared with 20,388 in 2020/21). Freedom to Speak Up guardians have handled over 75,000 cases since the National Guardian’s Office first started collecting data in 2017”

Looking to the Future...

The Guardian Service will continue to build upon the progress made in 2022/2023 and we will concentrate on the following actions:

- Development of a robust F2SU Communications Plan to support the 3 priorities. Promote internal mechanisms to aide staff to raise concerns and celebrate good news stories/improvements
- Recruitment, training, and supervision of UHL F2SU Champions across CMGs and Directorates
- Review of F2SU training and awareness activities to create a more bespoke training offer
- Collaboration with UHL departments to integrate F2SU in operational strategies and decision-making processes.
- Update the Freedom to Speak up/Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy in line with NHSE
- Complete NGO Reflective Planning Tool and devise an Action Plan for improvements

Conclusion:

The F2SUGs have had a busy year delivering improvements to the service and continuing to promote speaking up to help UHL achieve its ambition as being the employer of choice and the destination to receive quality patient care for the East Midlands. Staff have told us what is important to them; the right equipment and environment to do their work; the expectation to be treated with civility and respect; the need for strong recruitment and retention practices to address staff shortages and recognition for their work and efforts. We will continue to escalate these concerns and fully address the underlying learning so that F2SU can make a positive contribution to patient safety and the cultural improvements at UHL.

The Guardian Service would like to thank all the staff who spoke up with courage this year and expressed their care for their work and patients. And to all our colleagues who listened with courage and responded with compassion, we thank you for your support for making speaking up business as usual.

