

Report To:	Meeting in common of the Board of Directors of NBT and the Board of Directors of UHBW held in Public		
Date of Meeting:	8 July 2025		
Report Title:	Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Annual Reports 2024/2025		
Report Author:	Kate Hanlon, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, UHBW Hilary Sawyer, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, NBT		
Report Sponsor:	Xavier Bell, Group Chief of Staff		
Purpose of the report:	Approval	Discussion	Information
		x	
	To provide an update on the following for both UHBW and NBT: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of 2024/2025 FTSU data, themes and activity• Triangulation of themes and 2024 staff survey results• Action taken to continuously improve the speaking up, listening up and following up environment. To highlight National Guardian Office recent reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The National Guardian Office reflection on the 2024 Staff Survey results• Detriment Guidance• Overseas-trained healthcare workers experience of speaking up• Requirement for recruiting and embedding FTSU Guardians: framework for organisations and leaders		
Key Points to Note (Including any previous decisions taken)			
<p>The Boards are required to receive a bi-annual report on FTSU, to ensure appropriate awareness and oversight of FTSU activity and an opportunity for discussion and identification of organisational learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The last NBT FTSU report to Board was in November 2024 (bi-annual report)• UHBW Board undertook a development day in September 2024, with a report to People Committee November 2024, and refreshed Strategy approval January 2025 <p>The FTSU 2024/20205 annual reports from NBT and UHBW are presented in an aligned format, allowing the Board meeting in common to see organisational data side by side, encouraging cross organisational learning and supporting efficiency and effectiveness.</p>			
Strategic and Group Model Alignment			
<p>A healthy speaking up culture supports both organisations’ aims and Bristol NHS Group’s vision to deliver high-quality patient care for the people we serve, supporting our people to thrive, develop, feel engaged and empowered, making the most of resources and efficient and effective working.</p> <p>It aligns with strategic direction including Patient First, Patient Safety, People Strategies and both organisational underpinning Values and Behaviours.</p>			

<p>Consideration of future aligned Group working will further support the pre-existing peer support of the two FTSU services, review of best practice, and the existing linking of the FTSU Champion networks (CPD sessions). Interim and longer-term arrangements will need to consider the reporting structures of each organisation (e.g., Committees) and the Group.</p>	
Risks and Opportunities	
<p>A healthy speaking up, listening up and following up environment is vital to a safe, effective and continuously improving organisation.</p> <p>It is a golden thread that runs through awareness and understanding issues of risk, safety, effectiveness, equity and inclusion, early and/or preventing issues arising.</p> <p>Triangulation of issues from speaking up (broadly) through various routes supports key items raised on the risk register.</p> <p>In the current environment of change to services due to Group model working, financial constraints, uncertainty and instability, a robust speaking up environment supports patient safety, worker wellbeing, retention and reflection of themes for action and learning.</p>	
Recommendation	
<p>This report is for Discussion.</p> <p>Boards are asked to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonalities of the data and themes • Triangulation • How the Boards will actively support all aspects of the work of the FTSU Guardians in supporting a healthy, learning Speak Up culture • How the Boards will role-model, encourage and support speaking up broadly, with proactive listening and clear learning, closing the loop, and communicate the value to further improve buy-in and reduce feelings of futility or fear. <p>Boards are asked to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned next steps for discussion later in 2025/26, include consideration of the most effective FTSU structure for the Group, refreshing the organisational self-reviews, and strategy planning during 2025/2026 (and affiliation with related functions: organisational development, leadership and management training, patient safety, equity, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing, Patient First improvement) 	
History of the paper (details of where paper has <u>previously</u> been received)	
Appendices:	<p><i>Appendix 1 UHBW 2024/2025 Annual FTSU Report</i></p> <p><i>Appendix 2 NBT 2024/2025 Annual FTSU Report</i></p>

1. Purpose

- The purpose of the report is to:
 - Update the Board on Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) data, themes and activity at both organisations during 2024/2025 and triangulation information
 - Provide context for future requirements and arrangements for the FTSU service(s) across the Bristol NHS Group.

2. Background

- 2.1 It has been 10 years since Sir Robert Francis' 'Freedom to Speak Up review' which led to the implementation of FTSU Guardians within the NHS.
- 2.2 There is a clear CQC well-led requirement to 'foster a positive culture where people feel that they can speak up and that their voice will be heard'
- 2.3 FTSU Guardians support organisational proactive action on embedding an inclusive speaking up environment through:
 - Proactive work: a pivotal role as agents in promoting and embedding a culture of trust, psychological safety, openness, transparency and accountability where worker voice is valued for safety, learning and improvement, through raising awareness, breaking down barriers (including through supporting networks of FTSU Champions), training and engagement for workers, managers and leaders, supporting organisational self-review and triangulation to improve the environment and response,
 - Responsive work: a safe and impartial avenue to raise issues through appropriately, minimising fear of reprisal, providing support, focussing on response, resolution, and learning (restorative just, fair and learning culture) providing a mirror to the organisation on themes, dynamics and through independent constructive challenge

Developing this culture requires development of strong and open, collaborative working relationships with senior leaders, managers and workers and the resource required to strategically inform improvement, patient safety and workers thriving.

2.4 Current Resourcing:

UHBW: Deputy FTSU Guardian (0.8 WTE).

NBT: Lead FTSU Guardian role (0.9WTE) and Associate FTSU Guardian role (0.6 WTE – currently fixed term to Feb 2026).

3. Update of data, themes and activity (in the separate UHBW and NBT reports)

Assessment of FTSU cases, data and themes

- In 2024/25, UHBW received 110 Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) concerns, consistent with previous years, with the majority relating to worker safety and wellbeing – mirroring national trends. Concerns were most frequently raised by admin/clerical staff and registered nurses/midwives, particularly in Trust Services and Women's & Children's divisions. Themes included poor communication, bullying, unclear processes, and lack of support. While most concerns were resolved, 20 remained open at year-end, largely due to ongoing cultural issues. Feedback from staff indicated high levels of trust in the FTSU process, though some frustration remained around delays in action beyond the Guardian's remit.
- In 2024/2025 a similar number of concerns (130) were raised at NBT compared to the previous year. The majority were recorded in the inappropriate attitude and behaviours and worker wellbeing categories (similar to national trends) however there was an increase in concerns in the patient safety/quality of care category. Concerns raised brought valuable information to NBT for action. The themes of issues raised triangulated with those reported through partner teams.

Actions taken to improve speaking up culture:

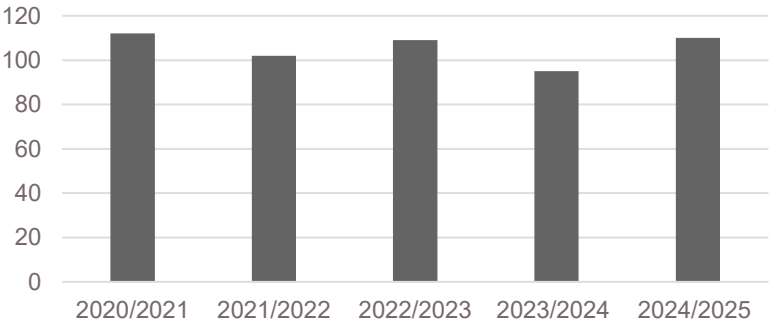
- In 2024/25, UHBW advanced its Freedom to Speak Up culture through a strategic focus on raising awareness, inspiring confidence, and removing barriers. Awareness was promoted via high training compliance (91.6%), regular inductions, walkarounds, and events, supported by 86 trained FTSU champions. Confidence was strengthened through the development of a data triangulation group, cross-site champion collaboration, and peer support initiatives. Efforts to remove barriers included monitoring protected characteristics (with no trends identified). The Trust also evaluated its FTSU arrangements through Board reviews, policy updates, and feedback mechanisms.
- In 2024/2025 NBT FTSU service's key actions were supported by introduction of the Associate Guardian role (fixed term) improving proactive and responsive capacity and resilience including: more rapid data reporting to Divisions for local triangulation, increased visibility, awareness, and training/engagement capacity to reach a wider range of workers, further evolution of the FTSU Champion network and their support (including networking CPD sessions with UHBW's network), input to related areas of NBT's cultural work (e.g., sexual safety, anti-racism) development of training material for managers (including in HELM), and supporting review of the Triangulation group process and ongoing evolution.

4. Summary and Recommendations

- The annual reports indicate commonalities in data and themes
- The Boards are asked to discuss how they will actively support the valuable work of the FTSU Guardians and networks to continue to strength the vision of a robust business as usual speaking up and learning environment.
- [The National Guardian Office reflection on the 2024 Staff Survey results](#) suggests a need for leadership accountability around fostering a culture of safety to speak up with organisational learning and change visible and ensuring sufficient time and resources to support all aspects of the FTSU function (proactive in addition to responsive).
- Boards are asked to note next steps for discussion later in 2025/2026 include consideration of the most effective FTSU structure for the Group, refreshing the organisational self-reviews, and strategy planning during 2025/2026 (and affiliation with related functions: organisational development, leadership and management training, patient safety, equity, diversity and inclusion, wellbeing, Patient First improvement)
- The FTSU Guardians continue to encourage the Board to role-model and proactively articulate the expected speaking up, listening and responsive culture, closing the loop and further consider actively communicating learning and value to the organisation, in turn reducing fear and futility.

FTSU Annual Report 2024/2025: Part 1: Assessment of UHBW FTSU concerns

Number of FTSU concerns raised to a Guardian at UHBW by year

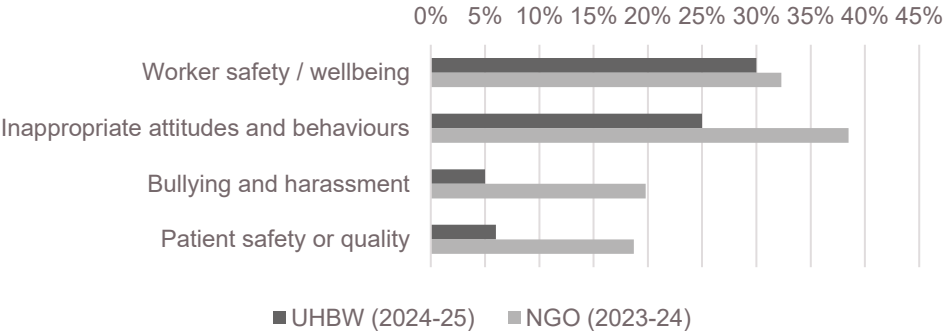


NB Concerns are raised as one case where multiple individuals speak up at the same time. Anyone speaking up via FTSU is redirected to their local route of escalation if this has not already been tried (and if this is appropriate). Signposting/ advice from the FTSU Guardian is not logged as a concern. Concerns are raised via email, via phone, via letter.

Cases 2024/2025	110
Raised anonymously	2

Concerns by quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Total	23	27	28	32

Percentage of concerns raised at UHBW by theme (NGO data from 2023-24)



NB Concerns at UHBW are categorised according to the predominant theme only.

What insights can be drawn from the data?

- The number of FTSU concerns raised in 2024-25 is in line with previous years.
- Relatively few concerns are directly about patient safety or quality of care which is as expected given established routine mechanisms for raising patient safety concerns.
- The highest number of concerns falls into the ‘worker safety/wellbeing category’, which is in line with the key theme reported by FTSU Guardians to the NGO in 2023-24.
- A total of 26% of concerns were categorised as ‘Policies and processes’ (a category not monitored by the NGO). This number is in line with last financial year (25%).

2024/2025 annual data by division

2024/2025	Diagnostics and Therapies	Estates and Facilities	Medicine	Specialised Services	Surgery	Trust Services	Weston	Women's and Children's	Unknown
Concerns total	7	11	6	4	11	33	14	23	1
Headcount (incl. bank staff) April 2024	1,676	1,239	1,786	1,449	2,611	3,904	1,147	2,723	-
Number as a % of headcount	0.4	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.8	1.2	0.8	-
% of total concerns by division	6%	10%	5%	4%	10%	30%	13%	21%	-
Proportional headcount	10%	7%	11%	9%	16%	24%	7%	16%	-

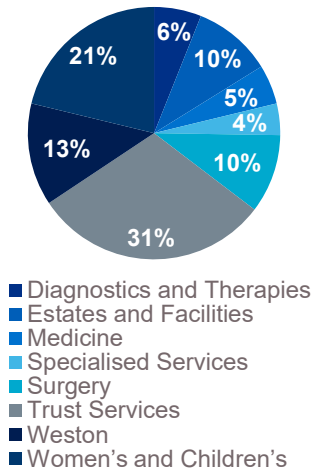
Concerns by division since 2020	Diagnostics and Therapies	Estates and Facilities	Medicine	Specialised Services	Surgery	Trust Services	Weston	Women's and Children's	Total
2020-2021	6	6	7	9	10	9	56	9	112
2021-2022	6	8	10	5	11	13	39	10	102
2022-2023	5	13	14	8	12	21	21	15	109
2023-2024	4	8	6	4	20	18	27	8	95
2024-2025	7	11	6	4	11	33	14	23	110*

*includes an anonymous concern where division is unknown. Two concerns were raised anonymously in 2024-25.

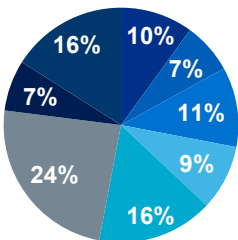
What insights can be drawn from the data?

- The number of concerns raised by staff in Weston via FTSU has continued to fall, though by percentage of headcount remains higher than other divisions.
- FTSU concerns have increased in Trust Services – largely driven by the impact of the move towards a Group model.
- FTSU concerns have also increased in Women's and Children's – half in the year were from one service. There is executive oversight of this area.

Percentage of FTSU concerns by division



Percentage headcount by division



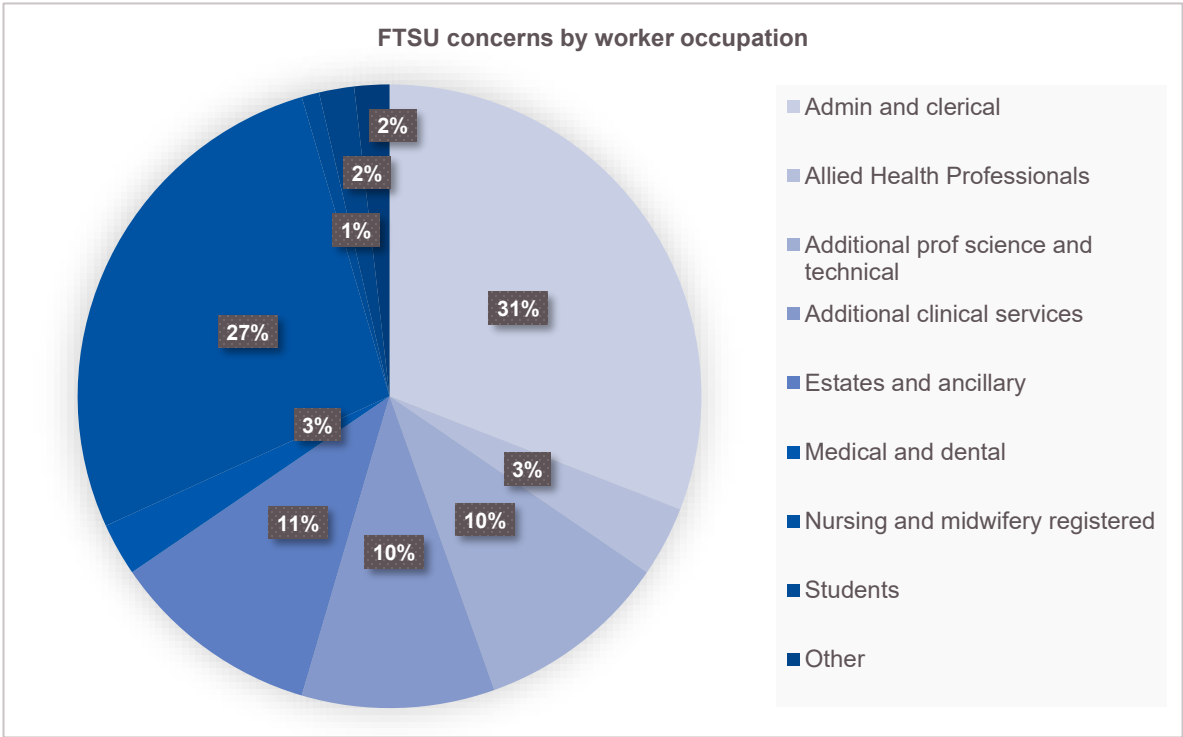
2024/2025 annual data by worker occupation

2024/2025	Admin and clerical	Allied Health Professionals	Additional prof science and technical	Additional clinical services	Estates and ancillary	Healthcare scientists	Medical and dental	Nursing and midwifery registered	Students	Other	Not known
Concerns total	34	4	11	11	12	0	3	30	1	2	2
% total concerns	31%	4%	10%	10%	11%	-	3%	27%	1%	2%	2%

What insights can be drawn from the data?

- Registered nurses and midwives, along with admin and clerical staff, consistently raise the highest number of concerns in the organisation – compared to other staff groups. This is in line with previous annual reports.
- We hear the fewest concerns in divisions where there are dedicated wellbeing lead nurses (Medicine, Specialised Services), and from a staff group (Medical/Dental) where there is a dedicated wellbeing lead.

FTSU concerns by worker occupation



UHBW FTSU Themes 2024/25

Patient safety / quality of care

- Skill mix
- Staff levels
- Lack of training and supervision
- Focus on targets/cost savings
- Poor communication and behaviours

Inappropriate attitudes and behaviours

- Discriminatory behaviours/language
- Micromanagement
- Concerns being ignored by managers
- Lack of communication
- Lack of support
- Poor team dynamic
- Bullying

NB As part of the Trust's Pro-equity approach, sexual-safety, anti-racism and anti-ableism listening workshops took place in 2024 to understand the experiences and priorities of colleagues. This resulted in over 1600 individual lines of feedback being thematically analysed, with key themes used to create the Trust's Pro-equity action plan which was launched in April 2025.

Policies and processes

- Fairness and transparency in recruitment
- Lack of communication / delays in Respecting Everyone investigation processes (beyond 8-week timeframe)
- Unclear job roles
- Unclear training requirements
- Unresolved issues around pay, leave, visas, flexible working
- Concerns around monitoring of probation
- Fraud

Worker safety / wellbeing

- Changes to service / role
- Working conditions (dehumanising; overstretched; unsafe)
- Dysfunctional management
- Lack of support during investigation process
- Unclear processes and standards
- Lack of understanding of reasonable adjustments
- Confidentiality breaches

FTSU timelines

- Number of cases remaining open from the last financial year (as at end of June 2025) = 20
- 15 of the open concerns are from Q4 (the quarter with the highest number of reported concerns over the year).
- The longest open concern is from July 2024 – the individual requests the concern to remain open as issues are ongoing. Four concerns from Nov and Dec 2024 remain open as no action has yet been taken to address the issues raised in these services (these services have flagged up in data triangulation work). Most of the remaining open concerns relate to team culture/dynamic where no change has been seen, but work is ongoing.
- Concerns are logged where the FTSU Guardian takes action, or where the individual/s raising a concern want the concern to be logged. Contacts with the FTSU Guardian relating to general guidance, particularly where local escalation has not been tried, are not logged as concerns.
- The FTSU Guardian keeps in touch with the individual/s raising concerns until feedback is given.

FTSU service user feedback

For all closed concerns, colleagues are given the opportunity to complete a short, anonymous feedback survey. 26 responses were collected this year, compared to 24 last financial year. In response to the question: “Did you feel that your concerns were taken seriously?” 25 responded yes, one responded no. In answer to the question: “Do you feel you have suffered in any way as a result of speaking up?”, four said yes, one didn’t wish to say and 21 said no. In response to the question: “Would you speak up again” 21 said yes, four said maybe, one said no.

I found the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian to be extremely helpful and professional. Though the Trust did not agree with the safety concern I raised, the process facilitated my raising this to an appropriate senior, and fulfilling my responsibilities as a result.

I felt fully supported and heard during the FTSU process, I have given a score of 8 [out of 10] as whilst I am happy with the outcome from the FTSU side I am frustrated that things seem to continually stall when escalating further (i.e. at HR or actually implementing any change). This makes it feel like we're going in circles and nothing is really changing despite the concerns raised and the effort that FTSU guardians put in.

The problem wasn't resolved and as far as I am concerned nothing has changed since it was raised nearly 4 years ago

This process helped address a long standing problem, the F to Speak Up team helped immensely.

The entire process took almost a year to be heard. This is a very long time for someone's mental health.

I was supported throughout the final stages of speaking up, in particular the pros and cons of mediation and what expectations to have.

The issues were listened to and I was updated also the outcomes were completed quickly .

I had detailed conversation and was reassured that the concern was taken seriously

The process protected me when speaking up. One interesting nuance is that I had initially hoped to speak directly to a senior regarding my concern, but instead interfaced through the FTSU Guardian. I came to realise that having the conversation facilitated by another experienced senior was in fact a better situation.

My Freedom of speak up Gurdian is incredibly helpful. she is knowledgeable, experienced and very friendly. Last summer I had a workplace issue related to my manager, that ended up with a health issues. The guardian helped me to navigate the issue and now I am much better. Thanks to her.

Triangulation

The annual NHS staff survey contains questions on the NHS People Promise theme of ‘we each have a voice that counts’, and specifically four questions which reflect how staff feel about raising concerns in their organisation. The results for UHBW show a relatively stable picture with results largely in line with previous years and above the average scores for other benchmarked acute and acute and community Trusts. However, there remains work to be done to ensure we continue to improve these scores.

Staff Survey questions related to raising concerns (% agreeing / strongly agreeing with the following statements):	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Best score for acute and acute and community trusts (122 in total)	Average score for acute and acute and community trusts (122 in total)
I would feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice	73.72%	75.88%	73.12%	72.29%	73.64%	79.71%	70.44%
I am confident that the organisation would address my concern	63.67%	60.32%	57.88%	59.15%	60.00%	68.85%	55.91%
I feel safe to speak up about anything that concerns me in this organisation	69.71%	66.76%	65.84%	68.41%	68.37%	72.15%	60.29%
If I spoke up about something that concerned me I am confident my organisation would address my concern	Not asked in 2020	53.52%	50.96%	55.53%	55.12%	63.63%	48.23%

Established in April 2024, the **Data Triangulation Group** brings together multidisciplinary specialists to identify and support “teams in need” through a robust, intelligence-led approach. Co-led by the Organisational Development and the Leadership, Management and Coaching teams, the group ensures a holistic framework is in place, including a Trust-wide team development offer.

Membership includes People Services, Medical HR, Assistant Chief Nurse, Divisional HR Business Partners, Psychological Services, Wellbeing, EDI, and FTSU. Teams are initially identified via staff survey data, supported by collective group insights.

The group meets quarterly and is aligned to the annual national staff survey cycle.

- February 2025: Based on 2024 survey results, the bottom three teams per division (24 in total) were prioritised for support. Additional teams were identified through Group collaboration.
- June 2025: Progress on interventions was reviewed. The team development offer has been rolled out across the Bristol Hospital Group, promoting consistent diagnostic tools and approaches, and supporting the single managed services agenda.

The Leadership, Management and Coaching team continues to refine the framework, building skills in team mediation, change management, and team development.

Going forwards, the Group aims to enhance its effectiveness by incorporating broader data sources (e.g., clinical data), tracking progress, and measuring outcomes.

“Data from the NHS Staff Survey shows that compassionate, supportive leadership mitigates the effects of organisational change on morale, engagement and stress.

During times of challenge and change, leaders must recognise that the priority is not just effecting changes to structures and processes but increasing the support for staff.”

The King's Fund, March 2025

FTSU Annual Report 2024/2025: Part 2: Actions taken to improve speaking up culture

In line with the 2025 FTSU strategy, actions taken to improve speaking up culture are categorised under the following three objectives:

Raising awareness

- | | Diagnostics & Therapies | Medicine | Specialised Services | Surgery | Trust Services | Estates & Facilities | Weston | Women's & Children's |
|----------|-------------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| May 2025 | 94.2% | 91.8% | 91.0% | 88.8% | 94.2% | 97.2% | 93.6% | 88.6% |
- Speak Up training compliance: 91.6% overall (one-off training, introduced February 2021)
 - Corporate induction (twice monthly in Bristol and once a month in Weston – supported by champions)
 - Steepholm, Draycott, Harptree wards walkround; Volunteer coffee morning Bristol and Weston; preceptorship presentation (April); Council of Governors presentation; Facilities team St Michael's update (May); resident doctor (F1) presentation; T-level presentation (June); Thriving Together event; BHI management walkround (July and August); Medicine walkrounds (August and September); Women's and Children's workforce and OD meeting; BRHC paediatric anaesthesia team; BRHC B6 nurse away day; Resident doctors' forum (September); RNDA, SNA inductions (October); Medicine walkrounds; Non-exec walkround - Medical Records (December); Resident doctor presentation (January).
 - 86 FTSU champions across the Trust. Four 3.5-hour training sessions held in the year: May 2024; Sept 2024; Nov 2024 and April 2025, supported by psychological services.

Inspiring confidence

- Development of data triangulation work with the aim to support services/teams which are not thriving.
- Champion network development across group model – first joint champion meeting in October 2024, second in March 2025.
- FTSU Guardian working across divisions and services to improve links, visibility and share learning, e.g. Pro-equity; wellbeing; and staff networks. First peer supporter conference and dedicated peer supporter Schwartz Round held in November; Learn and Share events throughout the year hosted by psychological services.

Removing barriers

- Data captured on protected characteristics – no patterns/trends identified in year among protected characteristics as a reason for speaking up.

Assurance that FTSU arrangements are continually evaluated, and improvement identified

- Board development day (September 2024) to review the routes to raise concerns across the organisation and the assurance in place that concerns are heard and appropriate action taken
- 6-monthly update to People Committee November 2024
- FTSU Board Self-Review completed and approved by People Committee in November 2024
- FTSU strategy refreshed and approved by Board January 2025
- SOP on escalation of FTSU concerns published as part of the FTSU Strategy. Available via MyStaffApp
- FTSU policy updated and approved by People Learning and Development Group (January 2025) to include more clarity around the role of the non-executive director lead for speaking up; and the process to be followed when an individual/s claim to have suffered as a result of speaking up
- One case of detriment was reported in the year – decision taken by executive DMG to not investigate after initial fact find as the concerns (and impact) were actively being considered in one or more other procedures.
- Referrals to national speaking up scheme (where individuals feel they have suffered as a result of speaking up and need further support).

Ongoing as routine:

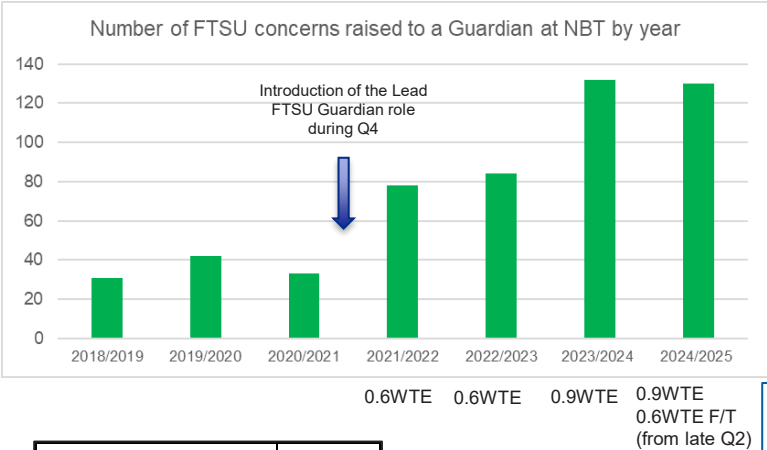
- FTSU information promoted through intranet and on UHBW website. Promotional cards, leaflets and pens handed out at inductions
- Feedback is requested from workers speaking up to FTSU. Diversity of workers speaking up captured – there is a spread of age, gender, ethnicity.
- Diversity of FTSU champion network evaluated annually against Trust workforce. As per last year, 13% of champions are global majority compared to 25% of the workforce); 23% of champions are under the age of 35 compared to 40% of the workforce; and 13% of champions are band 2 or 3 compared to 28% of the workforce. We have low representation from the medical and dental workforce.
- FTSU Guardian supervision (supported by psychological services)
- The Deputy FTSU Guardian attends NGO events, South West Guardian network meetings and local meetings with NBT, AWP and Sirona Guardians for peer learning and support.

Appendix 2: NBT 2024/2025 Annual FTSU Report

Part 1: Assessment of NBT FTSU 'cases'



North Bristol
NHS Trust

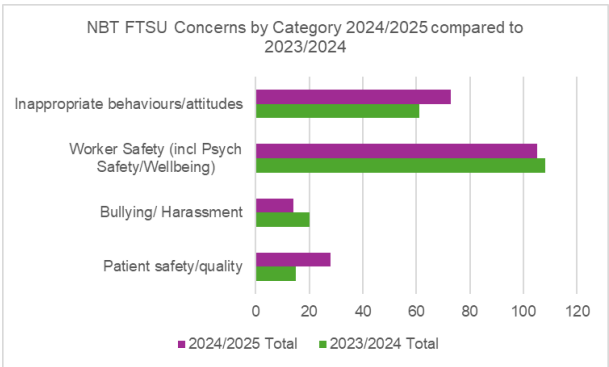


Cases 2024/2025	130
Raised anonymously	5

- The number of FTSU concerns raised in 2024/2025 was similar to the previous year
- The number of concerns per quarter averaged 33 during 2024/2025
- The number raised anonymously was similar to previous years

2024/2025	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of concerns raised to a FTSU Guardian*	28	34	31	37

Accurate median benchmarking challenging due to differences in organisational arrangements and factors however NBT results appear to track



NGO Annual data for 2024/2025 is not yet available

One case can contain multiple elements across NGO reporting categories (as per national guidance) hence total concern level is higher than the number of cases raised.

What do the data tell us? – insights:

- Relatively few concerns are **directly about patient safety or quality of care** which is as expected given established routine mechanisms for raising patient safety concerns. **There was an increase however, particularly in Q4:** concerns were raised in a number of areas where issues were felt to need escalation and/or assurance that Divisional teams were aware and responding.
- **The highest number of concerns continues to fall into the ‘inappropriate behaviours and attitudes’ category (and the impact of issues on staff wellbeing)**
- **This pattern appears to be consistent with national 2023/2024 reporting levels:** see the NGO 2023/2024 Annual Speaking Up data report: ‘Culture is a patient safety issue’ where ~ 38.5% involved an element of inappropriate behaviours or attitudes and ~32% involved an element of worker wellbeing or safety
- **Working environment/organisational culture ultimately affect quality of patient care and safety,** ways of working, communication, engagement, inclusion and staff thriving to provide high level care/retention (two sides of the same coin: safety, risk and worker experience)

Part 1: NBT Annual Data 2024/2025: Assessment of NBT FTSU 'cases' (continued)

2024/2025 Annual Data By Division

2024/2025	ASCR	CCS	Corporates	Facilities	Medicine	NMSK	WACH	Unknown
Concerns Total	15	25	25	20	21	15	5	4
Substantive headcount end of March 2025	2377	2236	1188	971	1870	1350	908	
Number as % of headcount	0.6%	1.11%	2.1%	2.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.6%	
% of total concerns by Division	12%	19%	19%	15%	16%	12%	4%	
Proportional substantive headcount	22%	21%	11%	9%	17%	12%	8%	

What do the data tell us? – insights:

Concerns levels in 2024/2025 are (proportionally to headcount):

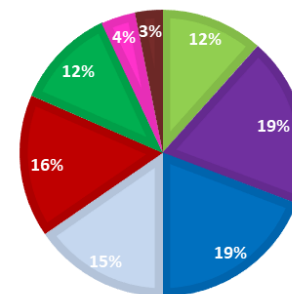
- **Higher in:** Corporates, Facilities
- **Lower in:** ASCR, WACH
- **Similar to headcount in:** CCS, Medicine, NMSK

Concerns levels fluctuate across Divisions across the years, this may include hotspots
Levels have increased in NMSK and Medicine, likely due to increased focus or hotspots
Levels of concerns have remained low from WACH; sense-check ongoing, e.g., with NSS data (confidence to raise concerns and confidence it will be addressed);

	ASCR	CCS	Corporates	Facilities	Medicine	NMSK	WACH	N/K	Total
2021/2022	13	13	16	9	13	3	9	2	78
2022/2023	16	11	19	13	14	8	3	0	84
2023/2024	25	16	38	7	21	14	6	5	132
2024/2025	15	25	25	20	21	15	5	4	130

NBT 2024/2025 FTSU CONCERNS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BY DIVISION

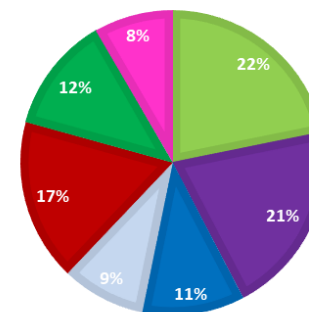
■ ASCR ■ CCS ■ Corporates ■ Facilities ■ Medicine ■ NMSK ■ WACH ■ Unknown



% of total concerns

NBT 2024/2025 PROPORTIONAL SUBSTANTIVE HEADCOUNT BY DIVISION

■ ASCR ■ CCS ■ Corporates ■ Facilities ■ Medicine ■ NMSK ■ WACH

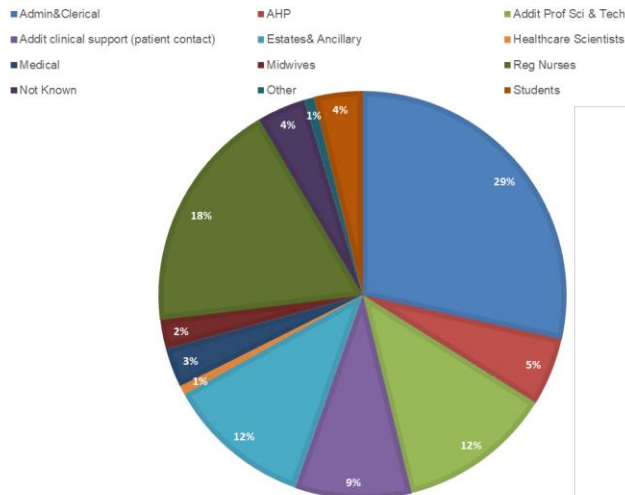


Part 1: NBT Annual Data 2024/2025: Assessment of NBT FTSU 'cases' (continued)

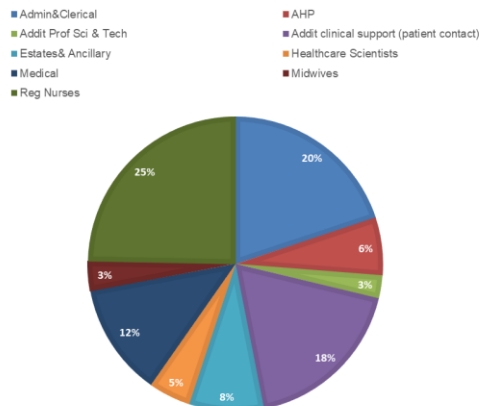
2024/2025 Annual Data By Worker Occupation

2024/2025	Admin & Clerical	AHP	Additional Prof Sci & Tech	Additional clinical support	Estates & Ancillary	Healthcare Scientists	Medical	Reg Midwives	Reg Nurses	Not Known	Other	Students
Number of concerns	37	7	16	12	15	1	4	3	24	5	1	5
% of total concerns	28.50%	5.40%	12.30%	9.20%	11.50%	0.80%	3.10%	2.30%	18.50%	3.80%	0.80%	3.80%
Proportional substantive headcount	20%	6%	3%	18%	8%	5%	12%	3%	25%			

NBT 2024/2025 FTSU CONCERNS BY WORKER OCCUPATIONAL GROUP



NBT 2024/2025 PROPORTIONAL SUBSTANTIVE HEADCOUNT BY OCCUPATION



What do the 2024/2025 data tell us?

High levels of concerns from:

- Admin & Clerical
- Additional Prof Scientific and Technical

Slightly higher than proportional for:

- Estates and Ancillary

Levels of concerns are proportional for:

- AHP
- Midwives

Levels of concerns are lower than proportional for:

- Additional clinical support
- Healthcare Scientists
- Medical

This aligns to national trends

Levels of concerns are slightly lower than proportional for:

- Registered Nurses – in one quarter there was a particularly unusually low number (and hence lower annually). Nationally this group is one where the highest number of concerns are raised.

These results are being triangulated against 2024 NSS Occupational Raising Concerns results and discussion ongoing with Professional leads around any specific barriers to speaking up and any related actions

NBT FTSU Themes 2024/2025

Patient safety/quality of care:

- Clinical practice
- Staffing levels or arrangements/skills impacting quality or efficiency of care
- Effectiveness of training and supervision
- Patient care related to professionalism/staff attitudes and behaviours
- Concerns raised by staff dismissed needing assurance
- Communication and/or poor relations in team
- Documentation practices and communication
- Concern around cleanliness levels and quality checks

Inappropriate attitudes and behaviours:

- Incivility/culture and communication/dynamics between colleagues or between professions or within teams
- Demeanour/attitudes and behaviours in interactions of managers and staff
- Unprofessional behaviours
- Lack of respect in interactions or feeling undermined
- Bullying/harassment
- Racist remarks or allegations of racist attitudes
- Confidentiality around worker situations or health
- Attitudes around support on training/progression
- Handling of sickness issues
- Fraud

Process issues:

- Situations not changing in response to issues raised in services
- Impact of handling of People processes
- Fairness and Recruitment processes
- Handling of extended leave requests
- Flexible working handling
- Impact of handling of safety incident and reporting – systems perspective vs individual 'error'
- Process clarity to respond to verbal abuse from patients
- Processes related to VISA and fulfilling requirements for Certificate of Sponsorship
- Financial planning and recruitment

Worker safety/wellbeing

- Sexual safety at work
- Impact of abuse from patients on staff
- Disempowerment in role/lack of support from manager to make improvement changes
- Ineffective handling of response to behaviours of colleagues
- Aspects of support for neurodivergent staff at work and their colleagues and managers
- Roster issues and length of shifts – work life balance
- Levels of cover and impact
- Support for completion of training or effective mentoring
- Confidentiality breaches

The NBT CARES values are often cited when people speak up to the FTSU service

FTSU process timeframes:

- FTSU cases raised are acknowledged within two working days
- Case closure timeframe is within range: two weeks to eight months
- Number of cases prior to 2025/2026 financial year remaining open as of 27/06/25: 12 (these are either the more complex issues requiring robust consideration, action and assurance by or to senior management/Executive oversight or more recently opened cases needing further dialogue to ensure when closure is appropriate)
- Factors in protracted length to closure: sick leave of worker, leave of staff member or manager, responsiveness of manager/leader, complexity of issue(s), FTSU workload balancing multiple cases, nuance, reflection and appropriate escalation/action/follow-up/closing the loop.
- Typical actions taken by FTSU Guardians: Depending on the situation (following active listening), action can range from: supporting the staff member to speak up to an alternative manager themselves, or escalation on behalf of the staff member(s) to a manager/senior manager/senior leader, through to reflection of themes and patterns.
- Learning from concerns has included: awareness of improvement required for various aspects of culture in areas of the organisation (behaviours and working to NBT values), communication, and inter-relationships, impact on wellbeing of processes.
- **Additional assurance:** The Guardian(s) check in subsequently with those speaking up to request feedback and ensure that workers feel that they have not suffered any disadvantageous treatment; this also serves as opportunity to discuss whether they feel improvement has occurred, from worker perspective, as a result.

FTSU Service User feedback:

At closure, feedback is requested in line with NGO guidance (including satisfaction and any disadvantageous treatment from speaking up)

- The FTSU service was accessible and responsive. The process was handled in a clear way; it allowed me to voice my concerns which were taken seriously. The process was impartial and fair.
- I so appreciated being fully listened to and space to process my thoughts and experiences. I hope some good for others may come from raising the issues ultimately.
- The FTSU Guardian was very supportive, keeping in touch, despite a busy service. The whole process was great, very supportive, great listener.
- I value the FTSU service; it is a safe space to speak openly. The issue I reported on came to a better outcome than expected without very formal intervention.
- Thank you for escalating this issue in a way that reflected the supportive and positive intention of raising it, with both patient care and staff wellbeing at the centre
- I really appreciated the support and efforts of the FTSU Guardian including the regular contact about progress and checking in.
- Thank you for the help; I have appreciated the time and efforts spent to work through this issue.
- I have been very grateful for the Guardian's support and contact while issues are gradually progressed.
- Thank you for providing space to talk this through and consider an alternative option for the issues to be re-raised through
- Thank you for the care you have taken in being in contact and considering how to raise issues while preventing potential risk
- It was good to speak to someone away from the immediate work area; this made it easier to be open and honest and consider a further route of escalation
- The discussion and the way it was handled helped me feel in control of next steps

One report of perception of disadvantageous treatment/detriment was reported in 2024/2025:

- This was reviewed by an independent investigator and subsequently by the FTSU NED for assurance. The review found that the person was not treated differently as a result of speaking up but gave some recommendations about possible learning on the approach used to consider the issues in the original concern. A follow up review at six months provided assurance that appropriate follow up action has been taken to address the original issues raised. The FTSU policy was updated (October 2024) to include the process in response to communication of disadvantageous treatment.

Trust-Wide Triangulation (2024/2025)

(NHSE guidance: *How matters fit into a wider patient safety and worker experience context to help build a broader picture of speaking up culture and opportunities to learn and improve. What has been learnt and what improvements have been made as a result of workers speaking up.*)

The quarterly [People and Quality Triangulation Group](#) (FTSU, People/Workforce/Culture, Staff Psychology, Patient Safety, Patient Experience, Chief Nursing Office, Health and Safety, Risk) shares respective high-level information around thematic concerns/issues, identified to ensure that Trust-wide joined up action is being taken to tackle and ultimately prevent these.

Over-arching themes from FTSU concerns that aligned with intelligence presented from other areas:

- Relationships, interpersonal behaviours, communication, attitudes or differences in professional approach between teams/team factors, individuals and colleagues/managers, poor communication between colleagues, team dynamics and conflicts
- Bullying/harassment
- Fairness in treatment and application of processes (and related impact)
- Communication between teams and managers, including lack of feedback loops on issues raised.
- People feeling dismissed/unheard by managers when raising issues and futility around clear action and improvement after raising issues in teams
- Psychological support required around grievances/people processes
- Challenges of cultural communication (with patients and colleagues), and need for culturally attuned approaches to People processes
- Challenges for neurodivergent staff, colleagues and managers
- Ability to be released or supported for training/fairness around progression
- Response from managers to flexibility or working pattern requests for work-life balance
- Issues around retained estates and impact on morale/wellbeing
- Abuse, violence and aggression (from service users)

These themes are with the relevant partner to progress in existing workstreams or assure that they will through upcoming focus, e.g. Living Our Values. Board may consider assurance through upward Committee reporting on the above themes.

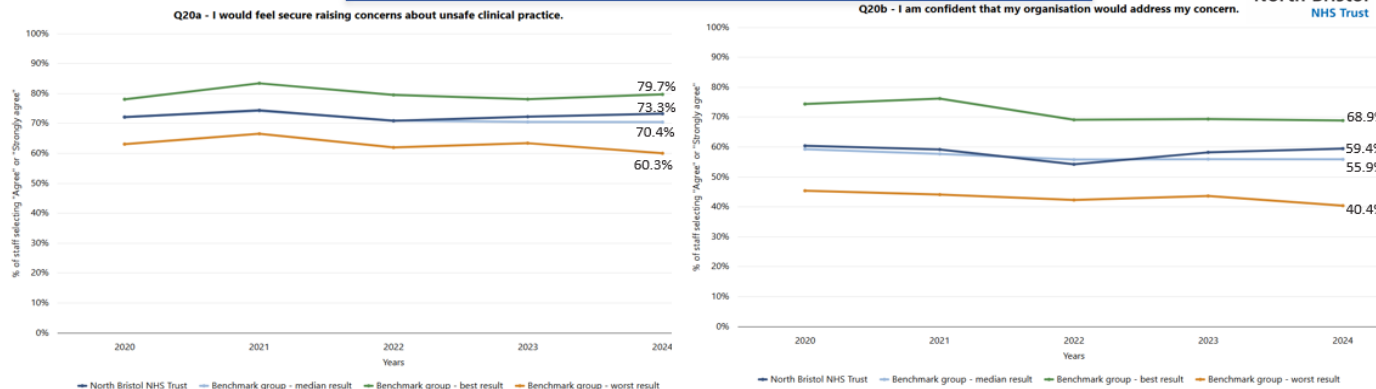
The work of this Triangulation Group has been evolving and moving to consider potential hotspots of areas for consideration and support.

Aligned processes and effectiveness on Triangulation across the Group will be under further consideration in 2025/2026.

NBT FTSU Board report 2024/2025: Part 2: Triangulation:

NBT National Staff Survey 2024 results: Raising Concerns questions: substantive workers

Q20a/b: Raising of clinical concerns and confidence in those being addressed

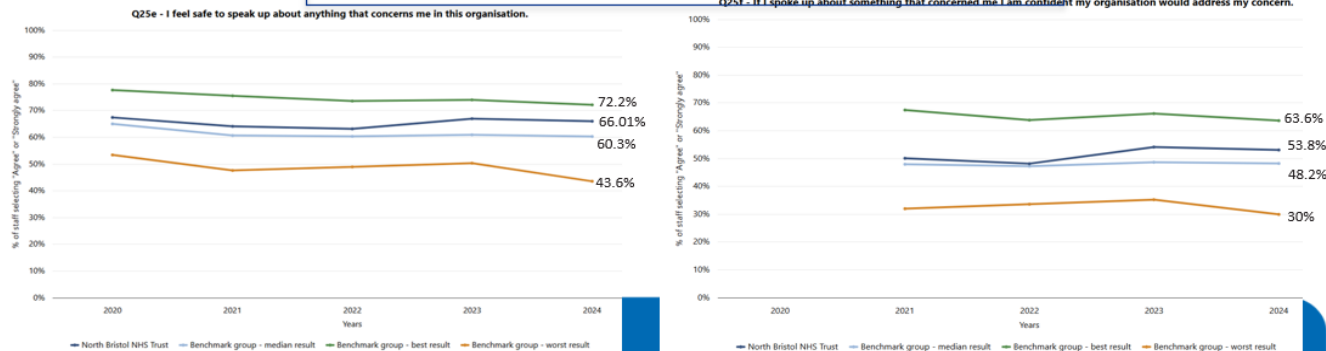


Clinical concerns and confidence in response: slightly improved position (~1%),

against drop for median result and worst benchmark group

Q24e/f: Raising of anything of concern and confidence in that being addressed

Q25f - If I spoke up about something that concerned me, I am confident my organisation would address my concern.



Any concern and confidence in response: slightly decreased scores of ~1%,

against drop in results for benchmark groups nationally

(NBT scores still higher than 2022 and 2021)

Results for the above questions for Bank only workers are several % points lower than substantive and 1 to 2% lower than Median

Divisional leadership have been provided with RAG and variance scores for the above questions for:

1) Division overall and 2) service level to aid local triangulation and consideration of potential actions.

The NGO suggests other associated questions are also relevant around speaking up: Patient/worker safety, support from managers (listening to concerns), reporting culture, feedback, improvement ideas, wellbeing

Promotion of all speaking-up channels:

- Coverage of the national speaking up, listening up, following up ethos, [speaking up routes](#) and FTSU service at fortnightly corporate induction sessions and various training sessions
- [Internal communications](#) through the operational bulletin and in Speak Up Month (2024 national theme: The Power of Listening)
- Through supporting the [‘We Do Not Accept’ focus and related cultural work](#); the Lead Guardian was part of NBT’s sexual safety at work group (supported listening events), has been supporting development of the Living Our Values platform content and involved with antiracism work

Engagement, training and service support:

- [Promotion of completion of the three national e-learning modules](#) ‘soft mandatory’ (not StatMan) at NBT (assigned in LEARN according to role).

Compliance:

Follow up Module	Completed	Commenced	NBT wide (Module)	Completed	Incomplete	Total comenced	Not started	Completed	ASCR	CCS	Corporates
NBT Board	94%	100%	Speak Up	66%	11%	77%	23%	Speak Up	62%	72%	71%
Senior Leadership Group	63.40%	85.40%	Listen Up	34%	27%	61%	39%	Facilities	Medicine	NMSK	WACH
			Follow Up	39%	16%	55%	45%	83%	62%	63%	57%

- [The Lead Guardian worked with the NBT Leadership and Management Trainers to weave training on listening up and supporting speaking up into HELM programme modules](#) (e.g., Accountable leadership, High Performing Teams encouraging managers to create the right environment for conversations to happen routinely)
- [Regular tailored training sessions for:](#) new Student nurses and midwives, Student Nurse Associates, Preceptors, Internationally Educated Nurse ‘Adapt’ sessions, GMC in-person sessions for International Medical Graduates, Apprentices, Accelerate programme. (Safe Learning Environment (SLEC) Raising Concerns Charter expectations covered), AHP learner session, presence at Accelerate
- [Team engagement:](#) updates and discussion, e.g., Pharmacy, Finance, WACH Professional Forum, and Community Midwives, Charity, L&D team
- [Inclusion of material on FTSU through the Postgraduate Medical Education and support team;](#) increasing medical representation in the FTSU Champion team (further additional Champion onboarding in progress currently)
- [Supported work in Pharmacy on speaking up and the improvement focus on retention](#) by local leadership with the FTSU Champion,
- Drafted a requested Medicine Division ‘Safe to Respond’ raising concern competency assurance document, liaising on Ward Accreditation related to speaking up

FTSU service actions from the 2024/2025 plan:

Introduction of the fixed-term Associate role to support strategic, proactive and responsive capacity, resilience, visibility, awareness, training.

This also supported the connection with the NBT FTSU network and further evolution of diversity in the FTSU Champion network.

The network will soon have 40 Champions including more medical representation and will be further developed in 2025 (filling gaps in representation, e.g., workers <31 years of age, <band 5, occupation, specific Division/Directorate areas).

Current NBT network equalities headlines: 33% of champions are from ethnic minorities compared to 36% of the NBT workforce; 25% of champions are band 2-4 compared to 38% of the NBT workforce, 3% of Champions (where disclosed) reported disabled status compared to 4.6% of NBT workforce. Ratio female to male: NBT Champions ~2:1 compared to NBT workforce: 3:1

Network visibility

Walkarounds (informal) have involved the Executive or Non-Executive Lead for FTSU, Lead or Associate Guardians; supported by Chief Nursing Officer and Deputies, Vice-Chair, the Deputy Chief People Officer and have included FTSU Champions where possible.

These have included visits to: ED, IDS, Outpatients, Facilities, WACH services, CES, Acute Response Team, Geriatrics other services in Retained Estates (Pre-op Centre, Elgar), Cossham, Corporate teams in Kendon, various wards (including early morning or late evening to speak with night shift staff, also on Bank Holiday).

Speak Up Month (national theme: 'The Power of Listening') managers were encouraged to consider their role (and the attributes needed) in listening and complete the national 'Listen Up' e-learning module. Activity included an Executive blog and video, inviting Listen Up pledges, various walkarounds, further Champion onboarding, drop-in provision and team sessions.

Improved timeliness of data reporting to Divisions and further evolving connection to support Divisional triangulation and embedding good practice

Session at Senior Leadership Group supporting discussion of role modelling by senior leaders and supporting managers with a proactive and responsive local listening up and following up environment.

Feedback was reported to People Oversight Group on engagement with a range of NBT workers around barriers to speaking up at NBT; the Lead FTSU Guardian also supervised an UWE HRM student project on barriers. Together this work (and key aspects from the NGO guidance on detriment) will be used to further discuss barriers and suggested actions with Associate Directors, Divisional leads, managers and professional leads.

NGO guidance on detriment reported to People Oversight Group; consideration of weaving good practice into manager training

NGO Speak Up Review on Overseas Workers circulated to NBT leadership and relevant partners: The Lead Guardian will weave into engagement

Manager guidance drafted and initial engagement session conducted; future sessions being planned

Objectives for 2025/2026: in part awaiting Group arrangements and discussion of best practice, meanwhile includes refreshing the self-review, further engagement with managers on providing a healthy listen up culture, disseminating good practice including on preventing detriment, reducing barriers, reflecting patterns around speaking up, encouraging communication of organisational learning and action, confirming and reporting diversity data of workers speaking up to inform any action needed