

**Whistleblowing**

**Annual Report**

**2024/25**

May 2025

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# **1.0 Introduction**

This is NHS Golden Jubilee’s third Annual Whistleblowing report since the new Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO) National Standards came into effect from 1 April 2021.

“Whistleblowing” is defined as: *“…when a person who delivers services or used to deliver services on behalf of a health service body, family health service provider or independent provider (as defined in section 23 of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002) raises a concern that relates to speaking up, in the public interest, about an NHS service, where an act or omission has created, or may create, a risk of harm or wrong doing.”*

This report provides details of any Whistleblowing concerns raised by staff within NHS Golden Jubilee. This report will demonstrate our performance in the national key indicators as required by the INWO and includes key areas of Whistleblowing handling, as well as highlighting outcomes and providing more detail on any Whistleblowing themes. Over time, this approach will illustrate trends in and more importantly, allow us to evidence necessary improvement and learning in response to the trends and themes demonstrated.

As per the requirements of the Standards, all NHS Scotland Health Boards are required to publish an Annual Whistleblowing Report, setting out performance in handling any whistleblowing concerns.

This is NHS Golden Jubilee’s third Annual Whistleblowing Report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Over the last three years, NHS Golden Jubilee have only received one Whistleblowing Concern.

INWO were invited to NHS GJ Board Seminar on Thursday 26 October 2023 to give an overview of the INWO service and its national leadership role in providing support and guidance to NHS Health Boards.

The NHS Golden Jubilee has recently supported, through our Endowment Fund, a Kindness Matters culture programme.   One of the principles of this programme is learning to ‘*call it out to work it out’*, with ‘*respectful resolution’*.   It’s aiming to normalise speaking up where we see any kind of behaviour or actions that aren’t kind, or compassionate, in order to respectfully resolve any issues. As part of the programme, we have recruited 61 ‘Culture Champions’, and although this is a different role to Confidential Contacts, it does mean we have more people in our organisation than ever before who are being trained in being able to speak up.

The new Kindness Matters programme and Culture Champions will help to normalise speaking up, and it does so without hierarchy, so it does not matter who you are in relation to the person you want to speak up about. This makes it really valuable when it comes to senior staff and Board members. The Culture Champions will take a lead role in role modelling this behaviour, sign posting the published whistleblowing processes should colleagues wish to use them.

A Whistleblowing Oversight Group has been established to provide assurance to the Clinical Governance Committee, Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee and upwards to the Board that whistleblowing concerns are being discharged in relation to the National Whistleblowing Standards and Once for Scotland Policy.

This reports provides an overview of our performance and a chronological summary of activities delivered over the year, as per our quarterly Whistleblowing updates.

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# **2.0 Background**

The national Whistleblowing Standards (the Standards) set out how all NHS Service providers in Scotland must handle concerns that have been raised with them about risk to patient safety and effective service delivery.

The Standards also require that Boards publish an annual report setting out performance in handling whistleblowing concerns. The annual report will summarise and build on the quarterly reports produced by the Board, including performance against the requirements of the Standards, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the issues that have been raised and the actions that have been or will be taken to improve services as a result of concerns.

NHS Golden Jubilee’s approach to the implementation of the standards was key to ensuring that staff feel safe, supported and have confidence in the fairness of the processes should they feel they need to raise concerns.

In NHS Golden Jubilee the agreed governance route for reporting on whistleblowing is to Clinical Governance Committee with any staff concerns being shared with Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee and then onward to the Board.

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# **3.0 Concerns Received**

The Non-Executive Whistleblowing Champion meets with the Confidential Contacts to ensure any whistleblowing concerns are signposted as a support to staff.

All concerns raised are reported and discussed at the Clinical Governance Committee, Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee and the Board.

The process for raising a concern in NHS Golden Jubilee is set out on our website/StaffNet and we are currently in the process of updating the web pages and dedicating a StaffNet (local Intranet page) to include a video and route through raising a concern

As there were no concerns reported the details of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are noted below.

Our Confidential Contact Service signpost staff within a number of different areas. As for Whistleblowing Concerns, none were raised during the year 2024/25.

There were no concerns raised from students, trainees or volunteers.

Whistleblowing continues to be highlighted to new staff as part of the Corporate Induction Programme and to newly appointed managers and leaders during training sessions. Although it is not mandatory for all staff to undertake the eLearning Whistleblowing Turas Module, it continues to remain a priority for all management level staff, supervisors, line managers, those who may receive concerns and those involved in Whistleblowing investigations.

The current level of training for staff is below and there is a continued push to increase that number.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Short Resource Hierarchy - Resource Name** | **Learning Status - Status** | **2023/24** | **2024/25** |
| Whistleblowing : an overview | Completed | 243 | 523 |
|  | In Progress | - | 118 |
| Whistleblowing : for line managers | Completed | 53 | 74 |
|  | In Progress | - | 42 |
| Whistleblowing : for senior managers | Completed | 43 | 57 |
|  | In Progress | - | 15 |

It is positive to note that the module completions have increased annually.

# **4.0 Whistleblowing Annual Return and Key Performance Indicators**

In 2024/25 NHS Golden Jubilee did not receive any whistleblowing concerns. However, we continue to learn and develop from the experiences of those involved in whistleblowing. Attached at Appendix 1 is the Year End Reporting Tool required to be completed for onward sharing with INWO.

**Indicator 1 - Total number of concerns, and concerns by Stage**

During the year 2024/25, no Whistleblowing Concerns were received.

**Indicator 2 – Concerns closed at Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the whistleblowing procedure as a percentage of all concerns closed.**

To date there has been one Whistleblowing Concern received, during 2022/23 that was concerned with the adequacy of arrangements within NHS Golden Jubilee for the provision of First Aid to employees, patients and visitors. The lessons learned are continually being reviewed.

**Indicator 3 - Concerns upheld, partially upheld and not upheld at each stage of the whistleblowing procedure as a percentage of all concerns closed in full at each stage.**

The definition of a stage 1 concern - Early resolution is for simple and straightforward concerns that involve little or no investigation and can be handled by providing an explanation or taking limited action, within 5 working days.

No stage 1 concerns were received during 2024/25.

The definition of a stage 2 concern – are concerns which tend to be serious or complex and need a detailed examination before the organisation can provide a response within 20 working days.

No stage 2 concerns were received during 2024/25.

**Indicator 4 - The average time in working days for a full response to concerns at each stage of the whistleblowing procedure.**

No Whistleblowing Concerns were raised during 2024/25.

**Indicator 5 - The number and percentage of concerns at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days.**

No Whistleblowing Concerns were raised during 2024/25.

**Indicator 6 - The number of concerns at stage 1 where an extension was authorised as a percentage of all concerns at stage 1.**

No Whistleblowing Concerns were raised during 2024/25.

**Indicator 7 - The number of concerns at stage 2 where an extension was authorised as a percentage of all concerns at stage 2.**

No Whistleblowing Concerns were raised during 2024/25.

# **5.0 Speak Up Week Outcomes**

NHS Golden Jubilee participated in the National Speak Up Week held on 30 September to 4 October 2024 with the theme ‘Enabling Speaking Up’. This was a networking opportunity across NHS Health Boards discussing how ‘speak up’ methodologies could be implemented within organisations.

We used quotations received from our Executive and Non-Executive cohort to support the process. The quotations were used during Speak Up Week and were displayed within the area next to the canteen. Our Communications Team also used these quotations within reminder emails sent to staff for each day of the Speak Up Week.

We also advised staff on the Whistleblowing Reporting Process and the Governance Framework around Whistleblowing.

Over the four days, we asked staff to complete a short survey to give them the opportunity to let us know, anonymously, their view on the Whistleblowing process. We received 130 responses which equated to 5% of the workforce at that time. The questions we asked and responses received are noted below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Response %**  **50-100% - Good-Excellent**  **40-50% - Fair**  **Under 40% - Further Work Required** |
| 1. Do you know at a Whistleblowing Concern is? | **81%** |
| 1. Do you know how to raise a Whistleblowing Concern? | **47%** |
| 1. Do you understand the process around raising a Whistleblowing Concern? | **42%** |
| 1. Have you ever thought about raising a Whistleblowing Concern? | **22%** |
| 1. Are you aware of the Whistleblowing information on the Intranet? | **52%** |
| 1. Would you be interested in becoming a Confidential Contact? | **Eleven** Members of staff registered an interest |

The Whistleblowing Oversight Group has now reviewed these responses and the following plan of action has been agreed.

**Action Plan**

1. Ensure Whistleblowing is featured withineDigest communications quarterly.
2. Paperwork left at Main Street West lifts to be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.
3. Promote the work of the Confidential Contact.
4. To point staff to the new Corporate Governance intranet pages where information on Whistleblowing will be featured. These pages will include anonymised examples of positive outcomes following concerns raised.

# **6.0 Whistleblowing themes, trends and patterns**

This section in future annual reports will provide information on themes from Whistleblowing concerns being raised and will aid identification of any improvement priorities and to progress learning in a targeted manner. Due to receiving no concerns, it is not possible to show the themes at this time. Feedback will be provided in future reports.

# **7.0 Independent National Whistleblowing Officer referrals and investigations**

A clear indicator of the satisfaction of those who raise concerns can be derived from the number of concerns that are escalated to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO).

At this current time, there have been no referrals to the INWO.

**8.0 Governance**

The Whistleblowing Champion is a Member of the Clinical Governance Committee, reflecting the role that the Committee has in overseeing implementation of the Standards within NHS GJ.

Quarterly updates on whistleblowing are presented to the Clinical Governance Committee, Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee and then onward to the Board on the following dates:

* Quarter 1 – 26 September 2024
* Quarter 2 – 12 December 2024
* Quarter 3 – 6 March 2025
* Quarter 4 and Annual Report – 29 May 2025

# **9.0 Conclusion**

It is recognised that this is a learning process and that processes may require to be changed or developed as feedback from updated Whistleblowing processes is received.

In line with the National Whistleblowing Standards, we reiterate our commitment to dealing responsibly, openly and professionally regarding any whistleblowing concern we may receive.

Throughout 2024/25, as advised in Section 8 above, the Clinical Governance Committee, Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee and NHS GJ Board were kept advised of any developments.

We continually raise the profile of Whistleblowing and our commitment to support everyone to speak up at the earliest opportunity.

