



Whistleblowing Annual Report 2025/2026

May 2026

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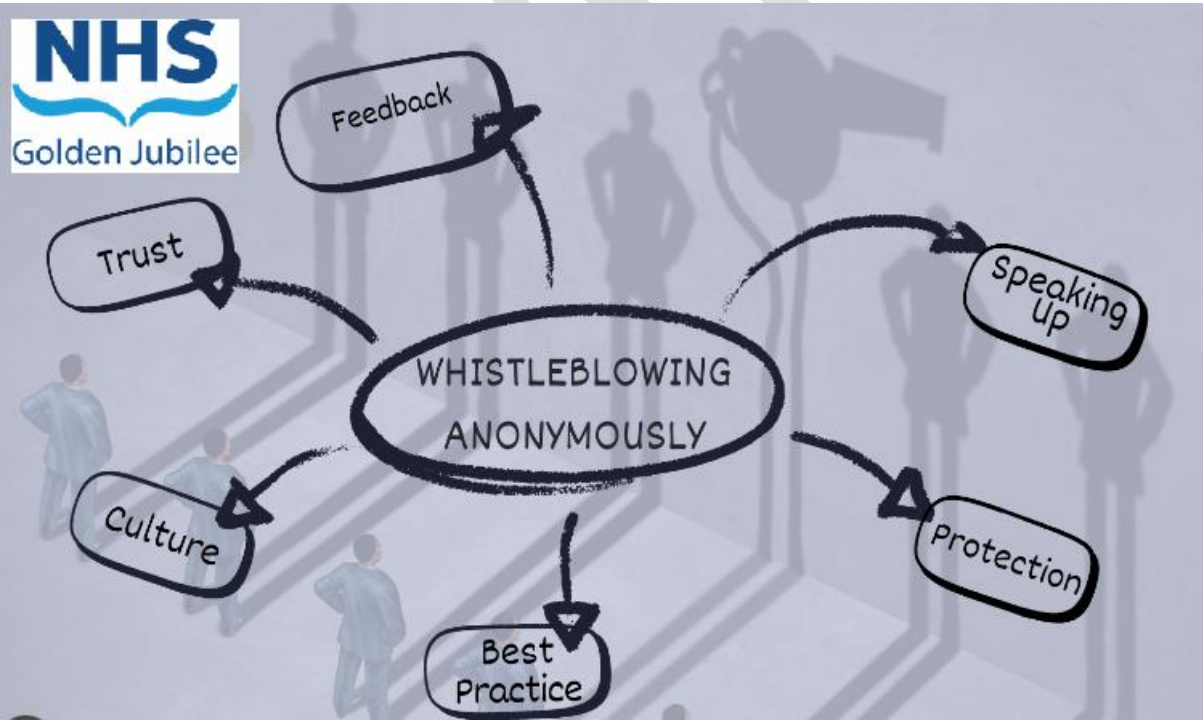
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1.0 Introduction

This is NHS Golden Jubilee's fourth 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. It sets out the organisation's performance against the national key indicators, as required by the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO), and summarises key aspects of whistleblowing handling. The report also highlights outcomes and provides further detail on whistleblowing themes. Over time, this approach will support the identification of trends and, importantly, evidence improvement and learning in response to the themes identified.

NHS Golden Jubilee has an established Board Whistleblowing Champion, Callum Blackburn, who has held this role since 2020. The nominated Executive Lead is Anne Marie Cavanagh, Executive Director of Nursing. Nicki Hamer, Head of Corporate Governance, provides oversight and support in relation to whistleblowing standards and awareness. During 2025/26, two Confidential Contacts were in post.

In line with the requirements of the Standards, all NHS Scotland Health Boards must publish an annual Whistleblowing Report that sets out performance in handling whistleblowing concerns. This is NHS Golden Jubilee's fourth Annual Whistleblowing Report, covering the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

No whistleblowing concerns were raised within the organisation during the reporting period (1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026).

It is considered that the introduction of the Kindness Matters programme, alongside the establishment of Culture Champions, has supported earlier resolution of concerns raised by staff. One of the programme principles is learning to '*call it out to work it out*' through '*respectful resolution*'. The programme seeks to normalise speaking up when behaviour or actions are not kind or compassionate, so that issues can be addressed and resolved respectfully.

The Kindness Matters programme and Culture Champions support a culture in which colleagues are encouraged to speak up, irrespective of hierarchy. This is particularly

important where concerns relate to senior staff and Board members. Culture Champions will take a lead role in role modelling this behaviour and in signposting colleagues to the published whistleblowing processes, should they wish to use them.

A Whistleblowing Oversight Group continues to provide assurance to the Clinical Governance Committee, Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee and upwards to the Board that whistleblowing concerns, if and when received, would be discharged in relation to the National Whistleblowing Standards and Once for Scotland Policy.

The 2025 iMatter survey included questions on staff awareness of how to raise concerns and the extent to which staff feel confident that concerns will be addressed appropriately. The results for NHS Golden Jubilee showed a decrease in the proportion of staff who reported feeling confident that they could safely raise concerns about issues in their workplace, from 77% in 2024 to 75% in 2025. Similarly, the proportion of staff who reported that concerns would be followed up and responded to decreased from 71% in 2024 to 69% in 2025.

NHS Golden Jubilee continues to take an open and inclusive approach to communication with staff, including regular monthly 'All Staff Sessions' held via Teams during 2025/26. These sessions are well attended and include representation across staff groups. They provide opportunities for staff to ask questions of speakers and raise current topics. The sessions are recorded and made available to all staff.

This report provides an overview of performance and a chronological summary of activities delivered during the year, as set out in the quarterly whistleblowing updates.

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 whistleblowing reporting is through the Clinical Governance Committee, with any staff concerns also shared with the Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee, and then onward to the Board.

3.0 Concerns Received

As detailed above, NHS Golden Jubilee did not receive any whistleblowing concerns during the reporting period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This includes any concerns raised by students, trainees, contractors or volunteers.

If concerns were raised, these would be reported to and discussed at the Clinical Governance Committee, the Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee, and the NHS Golden Jubilee Board.

The process for raising a concern in NHS Golden Jubilee is set out on our website and StaffNet. Work continued throughout the reporting period to refresh whistleblowing communications and improve the routes by which staff can raise concerns, including development of a dedicated intranet page with supporting materials.

The Non-Executive Whistleblowing Champion meets with the Confidential Contacts to ensure that staff are appropriately signposted to support.

As no concerns were reported, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are noted in Section 4 below.

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 complete the eLearning whistleblowing TURAS module, it remains a priority for managers, 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	2024/25	2025/26
Whistleblowing : an overview	Completed	523	616
	In Progress	-	53
Whistleblowing : for line managers	Completed	74	64
	In Progress	-	5
Whistleblowing : for senior managers	Completed	57	50
	In Progress	-	3

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

4.0 Whistleblowing Annual Return and Key Performance Indicators

In 2025/26 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 2025/26, 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 2025/26.

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 2025/26.

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 2025/26.

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 2025/26.

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 2025/26.

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 2025/26.

5.0 Speak Up Week Outcomes



SAVE THE DATE:
29 Sep - 3 Oct 2025



NHS Golden Jubilee participated in National Speak Up Week (29 September to 3 October 2025), delivered under the theme 'Speaking Up'. The week provided an opportunity to engage with colleagues across NHS Boards, share learning, and consider how 'speak up'

approaches may be strengthened and embedded within organisations.

Quotations from Executive and Non-Executive colleagues were used to support the campaign. These were displayed in the area adjacent to the canteen and shared with staff via daily reminder emails throughout Speak Up Week.



Over the four days, staff were invited to complete a short anonymous survey to share their views on the whistleblowing process. A total of 138 responses were received, representing 6% of the workforce at that time. The survey questions and headline results are presented below.

Survey question / prompt	Headline result
Do you know the organisation has a confidential email address for reporting a concern?	43% aware
If I raised one, I would feel confident in the organisation’s handling of a whistleblowing concern.	66% confident
Have you ever wanted to report something, but felt uncomfortable to do so?	30% uncomfortable
Do you think the organisation’s culture encourages whistleblowing where necessary?	60% agree
I have completed the whistleblowing modules in TURAS Learn.	54% completed
Would you be interested in becoming a Confidential Contact?	6% interested

The Whistleblowing Oversight Group reviewed the survey responses and identified opportunities to strengthen awareness of reporting routes (including the confidential email address), increase the visibility of the process, and further reassure staff regarding confidentiality and follow-up.

6.0 Whistleblowing themes, trends and patterns

Although no whistleblowing concerns were received during 2025/26, engagement activity during Speak Up Week identified improvement themes: increased awareness of reporting routes (including the confidential email address), strengthened confidence that concerns will be followed up, and reduced perceived barriers to speaking up (including concerns about repercussions and confidentiality). These themes will be monitored through quarterly reporting and future engagement activity.

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

Governance arrangements are designed to ensure concerns can be raised safely, handled consistently and fairly, and that learning is captured and acted upon. They also provide assurance that the organisation meets the requirements of the National Whistleblowing Standards and the Once for Scotland Whistleblowing Policy.

Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined to support appropriate oversight, independence and timely escalation when required. This includes the Board Whistleblowing Champion, Executive Lead, Head of Corporate Governance, Confidential Contacts, and members of the Whistleblowing Oversight Group.

Overall governance focuses on maintaining safe reporting routes, protecting confidentiality, managing any conflicts of interest, and ensuring appropriate escalation, oversight and organisational learning.

Reporting, escalation and assurance arrangements provide regular oversight of compliance with the Standards, including in periods where no concerns are received. Where a concern is received, escalation routes and timescales are applied in line with the Policy.

Review and continuous improvement is supported through periodic review of local information and materials, and through reflection on staff feedback and engagement activity to inform improvement actions.

9.0 Conclusion

NHS Golden Jubilee remains committed to the National Whistleblowing Standards and will continue to review and, where required, refine local arrangements in response to feedback and learning.

Though no whistleblowing concerns were received during 2025/26 and no referrals were made to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO), the organisation will continue to strengthen awareness of reporting routes and provide assurance regarding confidentiality and follow-up, informed by staff engagement activity and monitored through quarterly reporting.

Informed by Speak Up Week and other engagement activity, NHS Golden Jubilee will continue to focus on improving awareness of reporting routes (including the confidential email address), building confidence that concerns will be acted upon, and increasing completion of relevant whistleblowing learning and development.

During 2025/26, quarterly updates were provided to the Clinical Governance Committee, the Staff Governance and Person Centred Committee, and the NHS Golden Jubilee Board (Section 8).

The profile of whistleblowing will continue to be promoted, supporting staff to speak up at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

