

Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 28 November 2022
Title:	Whistleblowing Report – Quarter 2, July - 30 September 2022
Responsible Director:	Jennifer Wilson, Nurse Director
Report Author:	Karen Callaghan, Corporate Governance Coordinator

1. Purpose

This is presented to the NHS Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

The National Whistleblowing Standards and Once for Scotland Whistleblowing policy (the Standards) were introduced on 1 April 2021. NHS Board Members are asked to discuss the report on organisational activity in relation to Whistleblowing concerns raised in 2022-23 Quarter 2 (July - 30 September 2022).

2.2 Background

The National Whistleblowing Standards (the Standards) set out how the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO) expects all NHS Boards to manage, record and report whistleblowing concerns. It is a requirement of the Standards that whistleblowing data is reported quarterly to the NHS Board.

The Standards also require that Boards publish an annual report setting out performance in handling whistleblowing concerns. The annual report summarises and builds 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.

In NHS Ayrshire & Arran the agreed governance route for reporting on whistleblowing is to Staff Governance Committee and then to the NHS Board. The NHS Board report will be shared with Integration Joint Boards following the NHS Board meeting.

2.3 Assessment

An anonymous Whistleblowing concern was received by the Chief Executive in Quarter 2 (Q2) and the matters raised were appropriate to be reviewed as whistleblowing. However as anonymous concerns cannot be reviewed under the Standards, or be considered by the INWO, it has therefore been taken forward following the whistleblowing principles and investigated in line with the Standards. This anonymous concerns will be recorded for management information purposes.

As no other Whistleblowing concerns were received in Q2 a detailed report is not possible, a short update on recent whistleblowing activity to support the standards is provided below.

- Improvement plans: Table 1 shows status of investigations from concerns raised in 2021-22. Of the plans that remain open the actions are either in progress or complete and progress continues to be monitored through Directorate Governance routes with feedback on closure to the Whistleblowing Oversight Group.

Number Investigations closed	Numbers of Improvement Plans		Number of Learning Plans	
	In Progress	Closed	In Progress	Closed
5	3	1	1	

Table 1

- Speak Up Week: is an engagement event launched by the INWO in July 2022, NHS Ayrshire & Arran supported National Speak Up week, which took place from 3 to 7 October 2022. The purpose of this was to provide an opportunity for Boards to promote and celebrate speaking up. We engaged with staff at various locations across the organisation, this included Acute and HSCP sites, it was a successful Speak Up Week.
- Training: Proposed changes to the mandatory training requirements for completion of the Whistleblowing Turas Modules were agreed at the Staff Governance Committee on 8 August 2022. Completion of the eLearning [Whistleblowing Turas Module](#) continues to be mandatory for all management level staff, supervisors, line managers, those who may receive concerns, Speak Up Advocates, and those involved in Whistleblowing investigations. For remaining staff the awareness training is no longer mandatory, however, managers will discuss the Whistleblowing eLearning training with staff at PDR and encourage staff to complete the Turas awareness module if they wish.

Monthly reports will continue to be produced to monitor completion of the Turas Whistleblowing eLearning modules.

- Review of processes: The review of our Confidential Contacts and local processes is complete and a separate proposal paper will be presented to Board.

- **Communications:** Information on the agreed changes to the mandatory training requirements Whistleblowing Turas Modules, were disseminated through the Daily Digest and eNews, it was also shared with the Corporate Management Team to be sent on to all managers within the organisation.

Whistleblowing communications continue to be refreshed as a reminder to staff how to raise a Whistleblowing concern and include refreshed and updated 7 minute briefings.

2.3.1 Quality

Procedures for raising concerns should provide good-quality outcomes through a thorough but proportionate investigation. The approach to handling whistleblowing concerns ensures that learning and improvement is progressed for upheld whistleblowing concerns and are shared across all relevant services.

2.3.2 Workforce

The Standards support our ambition for an open and honest organisational culture where staff have the confidence to speak up and all voices are heard. This is focused through our organisational Values of 'Caring, Safe and Respectful' and promoting a culture of psychological safety.

2.3.3 Financial

There is no financial impact.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

If staff do not have confidence in the fairness of the procedures through which their concerns are raised, or do not feel assured that concerns raised will be acted upon, there is a risk that they will not raise valid concerns about quality, safety or malpractice. The opportunity to investigate and address these concerns will have been lost, with potentially adverse impact on quality, safety and effectiveness of services.

There is also a wider risk to organisational integrity and reputation, if staff do not believe they will be listened to and do not feel senior leaders in NHS Ayrshire & Arran are fulfilling the organisation's Values of 'Caring, Safe and Respectful' and promoting a culture of Psychological Safety.

2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities

A local Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Standards is in place and published on our [public facing web](#). This assesses the impact of the Whistleblowing Standards on staff and those who provide services on behalf of the NHS with protected characteristics.

2.3.6 Other impacts

- **Best value:** Governance and accountability and Performance management. The delivery of an effective process for whistleblowing concerns will support the Board's commitment to safe, effective and person-centred care. Effective handling of concerns supports the delivery of the Healthcare Quality Strategy.
- **Compliance with Corporate Objectives** - Create compassionate partnerships between patients, their families and those delivering health and care services which respect individual needs and values; and result in the people using our services having a positive experience of care to get the outcome they expect.

2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

There is no requirement for formal engagement with external stakeholders in relation to the formulation of this paper. There has been wide communication of the Standards across the organisation.

2.3.8 Route to the meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

- Whistleblowing Oversight Group by email.
- Staff Governance Committee on Tuesday 1 November 2022

2.4 Recommendation

The Board are asked to discuss the paper for Quarter 1 (July - 30 September 2022).