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**Freedom to Speak Up Strategy 2024-2027**

**1. Introduction**

At Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, we are committed to creating a culture where all staff feel safe and empowered to raise concerns. This strategy outlines our vision to ensure that the voices of our staff are heard and acted upon, leading to improvements in patient care, staff safety, and the overall performance of the Trust. Our approach is inspired by the findings of Sir Robert Francis's Freedom to Speak Up Review, which emphasized the importance of fostering an open culture to prevent failures in care.

**2. Where We Are Now**

We are actively working to raise awareness of the Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) processes and build staff confidence in raising concerns. While many staff members are aware of how to speak up, some remain hesitant, often due to fears of repercussions or doubts about whether their concerns will be addressed.

To address this, we have already taken important steps, including:

• Strengthening leadership commitment to creating an open and transparent environment.

• Increasing the visibility of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (FTSUG).

• A commitment to recruiting and training FTSU Champions to work alongside the FTSUG to support staff in raising concerns and promoting awareness.

• Developing clearer and more accessible reporting channels.

While these are significant improvements, we recognise that more needs to be done to foster a culture where all staff feel fully supported and where speaking up is embraced as a positive driver for change.

**3. What We Know So Far**

From the concerns raised to date, we have learned several key lessons:

• Improved Awareness: Many staff are aware of the mechanisms to raise concerns, but more needs to be done to build trust in the process and reassure staff that they will not face retaliation.

• Leadership Engagement: Staff are more likely to raise concerns when they see leaders actively promoting and responding to issues.

• Barriers to Speaking Up: Some staff still feel anxious about potential repercussions or believe their concerns won’t lead to meaningful changes.

**4. Our Vision**

Our vision is to ensure that staff feel safe to speak up and feel supported and encouraged to do so.

• Every staff member feels confident and supported in raising concerns.

• All concerns lead to clear, visible action and improvements.

• The Trust leadership is actively engaged in creating a culture of openness and transparency.

Key Components of the Vision:

• Raising Awareness: We will increase awareness across the Trust about the importance of speaking up and the processes available to do so. This includes regular training, visible communications, and accessible reporting mechanisms.

• Leadership Support: Leaders will demonstrate commitment to the Freedom to Speak Up agenda by engaging directly with staff and visibly responding to concerns.

• Psychological Safety: We will promote a culture of psychological safety where staff feel secure in raising issues without fear of retaliation or detriment.

• Timely and Transparent Actions: Concerns raised will be acknowledged promptly, with clear and timely actions taken. The outcomes will be communicated back to staff in a transparent manner, ensuring confidentiality is maintained.

• Learning and Improvement: We will incorporate feedback and lessons from concerns into our business intelligence, driving improvements in patient safety, staff well-being, and service quality.

**6. Monitoring and Accountability**

To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy, we will implement robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms:

• Regular Reporting to the Board: The Board will receive quarterly updates on the number of concerns raised, the nature of those concerns, and the actions taken in response.

• Data Analysis: We will track and analyse trends in the concerns raised, identifying areas for improvement and ensuring systemic issues are addressed.

• Staff Surveys: Annual staff surveys will include specific questions about confidence in raising concerns and perceptions of safety, helping us measure progress and adjust our approach as necessary.

• Feedback Loops: We will ensure regular feedback to staff through the ‘You Said, We Did’ process, demonstrating how their concerns have led to tangible changes in the organisation.

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**Review Date: September 2027**

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