

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Confidential Contacts

A Guide for Staff



What is a Confidential Contact?

The role of the Confidential Contact is to be first point of contact and support for colleagues who have a concern. It is important to bear in mind that all concerns are valid, and all of our colleagues deserve a safe space to be heard. Concerns can vary from day-to-day behaviours to patient safety. We recognise that concerns can be complicated and sometimes colleagues need help in establishing which route is the right one to raise the concern.



Confidential contacts provide a listening ear and will signpost staff to the available and suitable routes to raise their concerns, advising them of the options available, relevant Policies (Bullying and Harassment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy) and also signpost to other more formal sources of support such as the staff counselling service or trade unions.

Our Confidential Contacts have an awareness of key policies, e.g. Whistleblowing and Bullying and Harassment, and an understanding of the NHSGGC structure. We offer training and ongoing support to our Confidential Contacts, including quarterly Board Forums as well as a National Speak Up Network.

Confidential contacts will not make judgements about anyone who accesses them and will remain impartial yet supportive throughout, treating all cases with sensitivity, confidentiality, compassion and respect for the dignity of everyone concerned.

Ongoing support for confidential contacts will be provided by the Corporate Services Manager – Governance and Head of Staff Experience.

Confidentiality

The nature and content of discussions with a confidential contact are private and personal to the employee and as such will not be discussed with a third party without the express permission of the employee. However, there are limits to this confidentiality, if for example the employee or others are being subjected to unlawful behaviours or harm.

The Confidential Contacts will be aware of when to escalate concerns where legal or safeguarding implications apply.

Employees' names and contact details are known only by the confidential contact who is providing the support unless the individual requests or gives approval for their information to be shared.

How to Access Confidential Contact Support

The names and contact details of confidential contacts are publicised on NHSGGC's website. Employees who have concerns are encouraged to make contact with the person on the list who they feel is most appropriate for them. Often the selection is random, but staff seeking support can approach a contact in another division or department for confidentiality reasons. Initial contact can be by telephone or email.

Discussions take place either via MS teams or by phone, depending on the preference of the employee seeking support. The contact will usually spend some time listening to the employee before exploring the nature of the complaint. Typically, the contact will determine the employee's preferred course of action and provide them with information about appropriate workforce policies. If appropriate, the employee will be encouraged to approach other sources of more formal support such as the staff counselling service, their manager or their trade union representative.

In most cases the employee will be supported by the contact for one or two meetings, but sometimes the support may continue over a longer period, depending on the circumstances and the wishes of the employee.

Confidential contacts do not represent or provide advice to employees and will not act as intermediaries in disputes. Confidential contacts do not provide a counselling or therapy service.

Confidential contacts will set out the extent of the support which they can provide in discussion with employees who contact them.

What to Expect from a Confidential Contact

Our Confidential Contacts are visible and approachable to all staff across professions and levels.

They are impartial and non-judgemental, remembering that they may need to offer guidance and advice to those accused of being "perpetrators" as well as "victims".

Our Confidential Contacts are inclusive and able to support people who may otherwise struggle to have their concerns heard.

They are credible and trusted to deal with issues fairly, sensitively and confidentially, and to take action as necessary.

Our Confidential Contacts are resilient, able to handle difficult situations professionally, to set boundaries and seek specialist input or escalate where appropriate.

Key Contacts

**Brian Auld -
Whistleblowing Champion**
✉ brian.auld@nhs.scot



**Kim Donald -
Corporate Services manager - Governance**
✉ ggc.whistleblowing@nhs.scot



Human Resources Support and Advice Unit (HRSAU)
☎ 0141 201 8545



