

We're here
to help.

Speak Up!

A Guide for Staff



Introduction

Speak Up! is there to ensure that all staff know that if they have any concerns about issues affecting their working life, the quality of service we offer or the care provided to our patients, there is someone within the organisation to listen to their concerns. Likewise, there are a number of ways staff can raise their concerns in the strictest confidence, including the use of confidential contacts and through the whistleblowing process.

The National Whistleblowing Standards for the NHS in Scotland were launched on 1st April 2021 and apply to anyone working to deliver NHS services. It's important that you know what options you have to raise a concern in confidence and in a protected way.

If you are a member of staff and you need to raise a concern about patient safety, working conditions or wrongdoing, you should firstly speak to your manager, supervisor or clinical director, either informally or formally.

We recognise that raising any issue is daunting. This is why we have **Confidential Contacts** who offer a safe space for colleagues to discuss their concerns confidentially and be signposted to the appropriate next steps for help. You'll find details of who to contact on our Confidential Contacts page: www.nhsggc.scot/confidential-contacts



What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is a way someone can formally raise concerns about an issue that is in the public interest, such as patient safety or suspected malpractice. Whistleblowing can involve patient safety issues, poor practice, fraud and changing records.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic. It has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex and sexual orientation.

Confidential Contact

What is a Confidential Contact?

We encourage colleagues to raise their concerns with their line manager in the first instance; however, we recognise this is not always possible. 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.



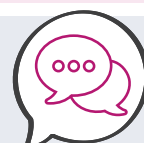
How to Access Confidential Contact Support



The names and contact details of Confidential Contacts are publicised on NHSGGC's website: www.nhsggc.scot/confidential-contacts. Employees who have concerns are encouraged to make contact with the person on the list who they feel is most appropriate for them. Discussions take place either via MS Teams or by phone, depending on the preference of the employee seeking support. 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.

What to Expect from a Confidential Contact



Our Confidential Contacts are visible and approachable to all staff across professions and levels. They are inclusive and able to support people who may otherwise struggle to have their concerns heard. Our Confidential Contacts are resilient, able to handle difficult situations professionally, to set boundaries and seek specialist input or escalate where appropriate.

Confidentiality

The whistleblowing process is a confidential process, meaning that any colleague who raises a concern will have their confidentiality protected. When liaising with services and management, all identifiable information will be removed. However, it is important to reflect that anonymity is not always possible, particularly if a team is very small.

As a Health Board we are obligated to protect whistleblowers from any detrimental treatment and any concerns of this nature should be escalated to the relevant manager or Director. Guidance and support can always be sought from a Confidential Contact, or the Corporate Services Manager - Governance, as well as HR.

Anonymous Concerns

It is important to note that the Whistleblowing Standards make clear that staff cannot be afforded the same level of protection if they raise an anonymous concern. In addition, if the concerns are anonymous, it will likely limit the scope of any investigation (for example, if not enough information has been given, and there is no means by which to contact the whistleblower to ask for clarification), it will inhibit the organisation's ability to provide feedback and offer support, and also means the person who raised the concerns cannot escalate the issue to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (see page 7) if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a local investigation.

It is best practice for anonymous concerns to follow the Standards, but the organisation is not obligated to do so (inwo.spsso.org.uk). NHSGGC aim to follow the Standards for anonymous concerns, where possible, where there is sufficient information for an

investigation to be commissioned. To ensure that concerns are fully investigated we encourage staff to raise them formally through stage one or stage two, with assurance of the protections in place.

Speak Up!

If there are issues where staff don't feel they can speak to their manager in the first instance, they can still raise them with the organisation. It is important that issues are raised as soon as possible to allow you and the organisation an early opportunity to address them before they potentially become more serious. This can be done directly through these services or in conjunction with trade unions and professional bodies, where the employee is a member. Below, we've outlined some of the ways staff can raise and report issues.

Whistleblowing



Whistleblowing is a way for staff to formally raise concerns about an issue that is in the public interest, such as patient safety or suspected malpractice.

The delivery of healthcare is wholly reliant on people. The vast majority of our patients have a good experience, which reflects the hard work and ethos of staff. There are times, however, when things can go wrong, and it is essential that we have an accessible, easy to use whistleblowing process, that staff can utilise if and when required. This can be a daunting process for staff, and it is therefore important to make clear that all whistleblowing concerns will be treated in confidence, and with respect, dignity and compassion.

Staff should always be encouraged to raise concerns within their own line management structures in the first instance. This is referred to as 'business as usual' within the Standards, and is good practice, as it affords the local service the opportunity to resolve the issues at the earliest opportunity. This is not part of formal whistleblowing procedures but is an important precursor to the process.

There are times, however, that this will not be successful, and it is at this stage that staff may choose to raise a formal whistleblowing concern. To do so, the contact details are:

- Email: ggc.whistleblowing@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
- Address: Whistleblowing, JB Russell House, Board Headquarters, Gartnavel Royal Hospital, 1055 Great Western Road, Glasgow, G12 0XH
- Phone: **0141 201 3712**.

It is important to highlight that there is a time limit in which a whistleblowing concern can be raised and accepted, **six months from when the person raising the concern became aware of the issue**. This can be flexible if there is a chance that the situation could create an ongoing risk.

1. Concern in writing to email: ggc.whistleblowing@ggc.scot.nhs.uk.
Triage: stage one - five days, stage two - 20 days
2. An investigation takes place
3. The outcome is sent via email (stage one) or via report (stage two)
4. A redacted Report and Recommendations are sent to the service with a deadline for completion.

For information on National Whistleblowing Standards, visit:
https://inwo.spsso.org.uk/sites/inwo/files/Standards/NationalWhistleblowingStandardsPart02_Procedures.pdf

Human Resources Support and Advice Unit



The HR Support and Advice Unit is there to provide quick and confidential advice to employees and managers on HR policies, procedures and terms and conditions. This can include talking staff through the formal ways to raise complaints and concerns, but also the informal routes to resolving issues that are provided through our **Once for Scotland** policies:

www.nhsggc.scot/once-for-scotland-workforce-policies

Enquiries can be raised via the **HR Self-Service Portal** (www.nhsggc.scot/contact-hr-support-advice-unit) or, if your enquiry is urgent and you would prefer to talk to one of the HR Assistants, please contact them by telephone on **0141 278 2700, option 2**.

Trade Unions/Professional Organisations



Trade Unions/Professional Organisations represent the interests of their members within the organisation and the wider community and in improving terms/conditions of service, promoting health and safety at work and employment security.

Any member of NHSGGC can join a trade union. Trade Unions/Professional Organisations recognised by NHSGGC are shown below.

- British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT)
- British Dental Association (BDA)
- British Dietetic Association (BDA)
- British and Irish Orthoptic Society
- British Medical Association (BMA)
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)
- Royal College of Podiatry (RCoP)
- Federation of Clinical Scientists (FCS)
- GMB
- Royal College of Midwives (RCM)
- Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
- Society of Radiographers (SOR)
- Unite the Union
- Unison.

Datix



Datix is the system through which all staff members should report incidents - even minor incidents - so the organisation can identify and understand what caused them and stop them happening again. This can lead to an improvement in the quality of patient care, staff safety and minimise future risk. Examples include needle-stick, manual handling, violence and aggression, chemical exposure, contact with an object.

Additional support can be provided by emailing the Datix team at datix.administrator@ggc.scot.nhs.uk, including requesting training for teams or groups of staff.

Occupational Health



If staff are experiencing health and wellbeing issues, our Occupational Health Team, including our clinical psychologists, are available to support staff when they need it most. Mental health and wellbeing are just as important as physical health, and many factors and life events can have an impact on how we feel.

Staff can also speak in confidence to one of the Occupational Health Nurses or arrange a counselling appointment by calling **0141 201 0600**.

Peer Supporter



Peer Support is a way for us to support our colleagues by simply having the time and safe space to talk and by providing a friendly ear to listen.

You can contact us at peer.support@ggc.scot.nhs.uk.

Spiritual Care and Bereavement Services



The NHSGGC Spiritual Care Service includes registered chaplains who are **available from 9.00am to 10.00pm, seven days a week** to help and support everyone. NHSGGC chaplains are trained, registered professionals who offer confidential, compassionate, inclusive, non-judgemental, person centred, spiritual, emotional and bereavement care.

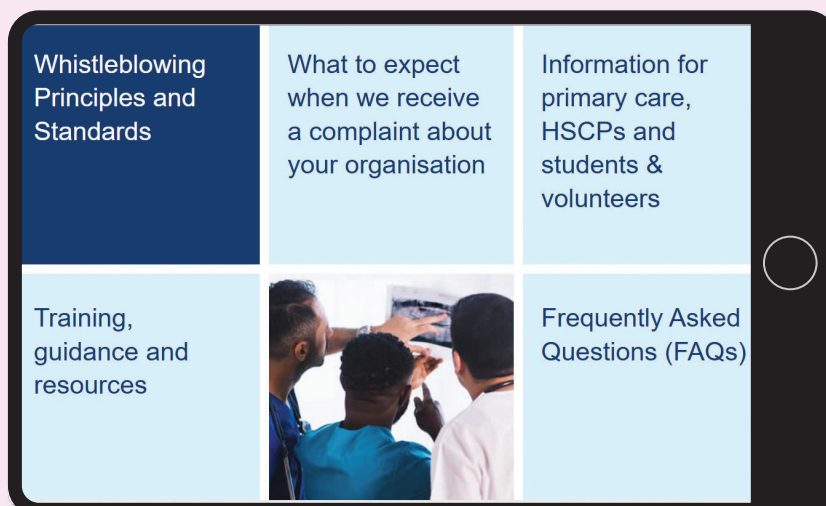
Any member of staff or student can access the service by calling the main switchboard on **0141 201 1100** and ask to be put through to an on-call chaplain.

Independent National Whistleblowing Officer



Staff can contact the INWO at any time for advice if they are not sure about something. The INWO will normally only investigate a concern after it has been through both stages of the local process.

At this point of the process, they should have a stage two letter which says that they can bring the concern to the INWO. A concern brought to the INWO is referred to as a 'complaint'. **Complaints should be brought to the INWO within 12 months of first becoming aware of the issue.**



The INWO can consider complaints about:

- **Any actions taken by the organisation** in response to staff concerns
- **Whether the organisation followed the process** laid out in the Standards
- **How staff were treated** during and after raising a concern
- **How the organisation supports a culture of speaking up.**

The INWO will investigate and come to a decision on the complaint. They can:

- **Refer the concern back to the organisation** if it has not been fully investigated. If you remain dissatisfied with the organisation's further response, the INWO can investigate the complaint
- **Discontinue an investigation** where an appropriate resolution has been agreed between the parties
- **Uphold the complaint and make recommendations** to ensure that the situation doesn't happen again. They can also recommend redress where people have been personally affected
- **Not uphold the complaint.**

If you are unhappy with a decision on your complaint, you will have an opportunity to provide comments and express why you feel the decision is not correct.

More information about independent review by the INWO is available at:

inwo.spso.org.uk

Contact details:

Independent National Whistleblowing Officer
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

Email: INWO@spso.gov.scot

Call: 0800 008 6112

Key Contacts

- Whistleblowing: ggc.whistleblowing@nhs.scot or 0141 201 3712
- HRSAU: 0141 278 2700
- Peer Support: peer.support@ggc.scot.nhs.uk
- Occupational Health: occhealth@ggc.scot.nhs.uk or 0141 201 0600
- Spiritual Care: 0141 201 1100
- Confidential Contacts: www.nhsggc.scot/confidential-contacts

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