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| **Meeting:**  **Date:** | NHS GJ Board  28 July 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Whistle-blowing – Annual Report |
| **Recommendation:** | Board is asked to:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Discuss and Note |  | | Discuss and Approve | X | | Note for Information only |  | | |
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**1. Background**

The Public Services Reform (The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman) (Healthcare Whistleblowing) Order 2020 (“the 2020 Order”) created the office of the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO).

The 2020 Order empowered the INWO to create a suite of principles, procedures and standards (“the standards”) to be followed in respect of health-care whistleblowing complaints.

The INWO published the standards in April 2021. They are available on the INWO website as follows:

<https://inwo.spso.org.uk/download>

The standards require that Boards publish an annual report detailing the number of concerns raised under the standards; any lessons learned from those concerns; and performance against Key Performance Indicators relating to management of concerns.

In addition, guidance form the INWO recommends that Boards report on activity within the Board aimed at raising awareness of the standards.

Since NHSGJ received no concerns under the standards in FY 2021/22, this annual report focuses on governance arrangements to ensure appropriate oversight of management of concerns and activities aimed at raising awareness of the standards.

**2. Local Arrangements and activity within NHSGJ – FY 2021/22**

To support the implementation of the standards following 1st April 2021, extensive work was undertaken by relevant staff and the Whistleblowing Champion to ensure staff and wider stakeholder awareness of the standards, and relevant information to support them should they wish to raise a concern.

**Policy and Communication Activity**

Following the implementation of the new National Whistleblowing Standards on April 1 2021, NHS Golden Jubilee has implemented a number of communications and marketing resources to ensure staff are appropriately supported and informed around the process and procedures involved.

A communications plan was drafted and agreed with the Whistleblowing Short Life Working Group which covered a range of traditional and digital communications techniques. To date this has included:

* a complete re-draft of all Staffnet (intranet) content;
* a redesign of our Whistleblowing and Confidential Contacts intranet pages;
* a redraft of our Bullying and Harassment intranet pages to provide clarity of purpose;
* the design and build of our public website Whistleblowing section;
* the design and build of the Confidential Contacts section (including biographies) for our public website (see section below);
* a series of short videos with our Whistleblowing Champion to raise awareness of the process;
* social media posts on NHS Golden Jubilee channels highlighting all key messages on whistleblowing ;
* an interview in the Staff Magazine with our Whistleblowing Champion to highlight the changes and raise awareness of the role within the organisation;
* regular articles in our Staff Magazine and eDigest (digital comms update sent out 3 times a week) directing staff and managers to Whistleblowing training materials;
* Drafting and design of dedicated QR code posters to improve access to training and information for staff who do not have regular access to a computer; and
* posters circulated to Hospital managers to distribute within their areas;
* This is an ongoing Communications Plan, which will be regularly updated and new announcements or materials will be circulated, as appropriate, using a mix of traditional and digital communication methods.
* Updating and uploading the comprehensive Datix “How To” Guide
* Links to training courses / HR Connect
* Information on Fraud Liaison Officer

Under the previous standards, this information was only shared internally. However, to keep NHS Golden Jubilee compliant with the new procedures, this information was replicated on a newly developed, dedicated, Whistleblowing section of the NHSGJ website.

For the Committee’s assurance, information to assist staff members wishing to raise a concern are available on the Intranet as follows:

<http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/search/?search_paths%5B%5D=&query=whistleblowing&submit=Search>

The above link contains detail of the process to be followed when raising a concern. It also contains information on Turas modules for all staff and targeted training for Managers.

Work to improve access to this information for staff who may not have regular access to a computer has been a principal focus in developing the design of QR code posters which are now communicated throughout the NHSGJ estate. This will allow staff to access training and information via their phone whether on or off site.

**Appointment of Confidential Contacts**

Full guidance, on the role of a Confidential Contact, including FAQs, is available for staff at the link below:

[**http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/staff-work/confidential-contacts/**](http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/staff-work/confidential-contacts/)

The role of a confidential contact involves the following key tasks in support of delivery of the standards:

* working with the whistleblowing champion to ensure that all staff are aware of the arrangements for raising concerns within their organisation;
* promoting a culture of trust, which values the raising of concerns as a route to learning and improvement;
* through direct contact with frontline staff, ensuring they are aware of and have access to the support services available to them when they raise concerns;
* assisting managers in using concerns as opportunities for learning and improvement; and
* working with the chief executive and those they have identified to oversee application of the Standards, to ensure the Standards are functioning at all levels of the organisation.

NHSGJ’s current confidential contacts are at the following link:

<http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/staff-work/confidential-contacts/meet-contacts/>

**Training Activity**

NES has developed a series of modules aimed at raising awareness of the standards. These modules are available via TURAS, with the level of training tailored depending on the role that the trainee has in implementation of the standards within their board.

The training materials are available at the following link:

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/40284/national-whistleblowing-standards-training>.

**Governance**

The Whistleblowing Champion has been referenced specifically in the Terms of Reference of the Clinical Governance Committee for 2022/23, reflecting the role that the Committee has in overseeing implementation of the standards within NHSGJ.

The Committee also heard quarterly updates on whistleblowing at the following Committee meetings:

Quarter 1 – 13 June 2021

Quarter 2 – 9 September 2021

Quarter 3 – 13 January 2022; and

Quarter 4 – 29 June 2022.

In addition, whistle-blowing features on the work-plan of the Clinical Governance Risk Management Group.

**Additional Awareness Activity**

In December 2021 the Board’s Whistleblowing Champion received a letter from the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care seeking an update on whistle-blowing activity and awareness within NHS Golden Jubilee.

The response of the Whistleblowing Champion referenced previous communications activity aimed at raising awareness of:

(i) the National Whistleblowing Standards;

(ii) local arrangements within NHSGJ aimed at implementation of the standards;

(iii) training materials available to assist staff, and those receiving whistleblowing complaints, available via NES.

A presentation was also made to the Staff Governance Group on 17 February 2022 to remind staff of the arrangements within NHS Golden Jubilee to implement the standards, and resources to assist them in accessing them should they desire.

**3. Whistleblowing Champion’s Comments**

All Health Boards in Scotland have a Non-Executive Director Whistleblowing Champion in place, and in NHS Golden Jubilee that is Callum Blackburn. Callum has offered the following comments on his experience of the first year of the whistleblowing standards being in place and this reporting period:

“The report demonstrates the considerable activity within NHSGJ in Financial year 2021/22 aimed at raising awareness of the whistleblowing standards. The report also captures the work which has been undertaken to ensure NHSGJ’s local arrangements are sufficiently developed to provide all those covered by the standards, with clear information on where to turn if they have a concern, and to provide assurance to the Board that whistleblowing concerns are properly captured and investigated when they arise. This includes our staff, students, contractors and volunteers that are all covered by the standards.

I have had numerous opportunities to communicate directly with staff using established communications channels, and I have also attended various committees, the Staff Forum and meet with confidential contacts. This reassures me that NHSGJ is committed to maintaining a positive and transparent culture of speaking up throughout the organisation. I am also pleased that the NHSGJ continues to be innovative in its use of communications to raise awareness of the Standards.

Collaborating with colleagues across other NHS boards has been important in this first year, as good practice on awareness raising, training and whistleblowing issues have all been shared. The NHS Golden Jubilee also has shared Whistleblowing reporting responsibilities with the NES and HIS Boards for the NHS Scotland Academy and Centre for Sustainable Delivery (CfSD) respectively.

Looking ahead to 2022/23 and beyond, it is clear that there are opportunities to strengthen our organisational culture and governance processes further. Refreshed training materials have recently become available via NHS National Education for Scotland, and I will work with colleagues to ensure that these important materials are known to staff as part of their personal development activities. In addition, I will work with colleagues to strengthen our reporting arrangements to the Board and the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO).”

**4. Recommendation**

Board is asked to approve the contents of this Report, and to note it will be sent for information to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer for information.

**Name Anne Marie Cavanagh**

**Title Executive Director of Nursing and AHPs**

**Date 28 July 2022**