



Confidential Contacts

A guide for staff at
NHS Golden Jubilee





New process for helping staff raise concerns



The role of confidential contacts is to provide informal signposting, support and encourage staff to raise and address their concerns at the earliest opportunity and support staff to contribute to creating a culture of openness and honesty.

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.

Where appropriate, confidential contacts will help the staff to understand their responsibility to pursue their issue through existing channels, including the options for informal resolution via the Bullying and Harassment Policy. They will also support and signpost staff whose issue falls within the scope of the Board Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that the appropriate procedure is followed.

All confidential contacts will receive full training to enable them to support employees appropriately so they are familiar with the possible ways forward and are able to outline options without telling the employee what to do or making a decision for them. 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 Employee Director and Associate Director of HR.

Maintaining 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.



Accessing a confidential Contact



The names and contact details of confidential contacts are publicised on NHSGJ'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 face to face or over the telephone, 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. Neither do they accompany individuals in hearings or meetings about their complaint. Confidential contacts will set out the extent of the support which they can provide in discussion with employees who contact them.



Requirements for the Confidential Contact role



Knowledge and Skills required:

Knowledge and understanding of the NHS Scotland Bullying and Harassment Policy and suite of supporting documents/toolkits, Whistleblowing Policy and Standards and local processes for raising concerns.

Awareness of NHSGJ organisational structures, networks and key contacts.

Excellent interpersonal skills, including listening, empathy, verbal and non-verbal communication.





Key Characteristics:

Visible and approachable to all staff across professions and levels.

Impartial and non-judgemental, remembering that they may need to offer guidance and advice to those accused of being “perpetrators” as well as “victims”.

Inclusive and able to support people who may otherwise struggle to have their concerns heard.

Credible and trusted to deal with issues fairly, sensitively and confidentially, and to take action as necessary.

Empathetic to people who wish to raise a concern, especially those who may be encountering difficulties, and able to facilitate constructive conversations.

Resilient, able to handle difficult situations professionally, to set boundaries and seek specialist input or escalate where appropriate.



NHS Golden Jubilee

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