

**Meeting:** Argyll & Bute Integrated Joint Board  
**Meeting date:** 25 May 2022  
**Title:** Quarterly Whistleblowing Standards Reporting  
**Responsible Executive:** Fiona Hogg, Director of People & Culture  
**Report Author:** Fiona Hogg, Director of People & Culture

## 1 Purpose

**This is presented to the Committee for:**

- Discussion
- Assurance

**This report relates to a:**

- Legal requirement

**This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):**

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

**This report relates to the following Corporate Objective(s)**

<b>Clinical and Care Excellence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving health</li> <li>• Keeping you safe</li> <li>• Innovating our care</li> </ul>	X	<b>Partners in Care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in partnership</li> <li>• Listening and responding</li> <li>• Communicating well</li> </ul>	X X
<b>A Great Place to Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing talent</li> <li>• Leading by example</li> <li>• Being inclusive</li> <li>• Learning from experience</li> <li>• Improving wellbeing</li> </ul>	X X	<b>Safe and Sustainable</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting our environment</li> <li>• In control</li> <li>• Well run</li> </ul>	X X X

## 2 Report summaries

### 2.1 Situation

Attached is the third Quarterly Whistleblowing Standards report for NHS Highland, covering the period 1 January - 31 March 2022, for review and feedback from the IJB. This will also be presented to the NHS Highland Board meeting on 31 May 2022.

### 2.2 Background

All NHS Scotland organisations are required to follow the National Whistleblowing Principles and Standards with effect from 1 April 2021. Any organisation providing an NHS service should have procedures in place that enable their staff, students, volunteers, and others delivering health services, to access the National Whistleblowing Standards.

As part of these requirements, a report is required to be presented to the Board on a quarterly basis, as per the extract below from the INWO website. It is also required to present this to the Argyll & Bute IJB on a quarterly basis, in respect of NHS Scotland services delivered by the HSCP on behalf of NHS Highland

#### ***“Monitoring***

*The number of concerns raised by staff will be reported to a public meeting of the board on a quarterly basis. It is the board’s responsibility to ensure this reporting is on time and accurate. The analysis should highlight issues that may cut across services and those that can inform wider decision-making. Board members should show interest in what this information is saying about issues in service delivery as well as organisational culture. This may mean on occasions that board members challenge the information being presented or seek additional supporting evidence of outcomes and improvements. They should also explore the reasons behind lower than expected numbers of concerns being raised, based on trend analysis and benchmarking data.”*

Therefore, NHS Highland will present their monitoring report to the NHS Highland Board and Argyll & Bute IJB on a quarterly basis going forward, following review at the Staff Governance Committee.

### 2.3 Assessment

The Argyll & Bute IJB plays a critical role in ensuring the Whistleblowing Standards are adhered to in respect of any service delivered on behalf of NHS Highland within Argyll & Bute, including through ensuring quarterly reporting is presented and robust challenge and interrogation of this takes place.

The Guardian Service, as our Whistleblowing Standards confidential contacts carry out the recording and reporting of concerns and possible concerns. Along with the INWO Liaison officer for the Board, Fiona Hogg, the HR Lead, Gaye Boyd and the Whistleblowing Non-Executive Director, Bert Donald, the Guardian Service have compiled the attached report.

## **Report Development**

We are particularly limited in our ability to report on trends or the outcomes of cases at this time, as a result of small numbers of cases, but this will be built into the report as these cases conclude and additional concerns are investigated.

## **New Cases**

We had one new case raised in Q4, relating to concerns over the availability of cardiac beds in an Acute hospital. This is being investigated by senior clinical leadership and a term of reference has been created for approval to allow this to progress. Regular updates to the complainant are being made, in line with the standards.

## **Ongoing cases**

It should be noted that as this is only the fourth period of reporting, and there are only 5 actual Whistleblowing Concerns raised to date, 2 of which are still being investigated and have not concluded, it is not possible to include all the detail that will be expected in future reports. However, both open cases are being led by senior management and being overseen by the Lead Executive. These cases will help to inform future processes, as we build our knowledge and experience in this area.

## **Concluded Cases**

We had one case concluded in Q4, relating to the management of GP services in a specific area of Argyll & Bute. Aspect of the complaint have been upheld and actions proposed in the investigation implemented. A longer-term action plan is underway and is being overseen by the Area Manager and Primary Care leadership.

## **Internal Audit of Implementation of the Standards**

The remaining actions from the Audit have been delayed from March 2022, due to service pressures during the last 3 months, but are on track to complete by end June 2022.

## **Awareness and Training Progress**

Our Whistleblowing Standards Implementation Group, chaired by the Deputy Director of People and which our WB Champion is also a member of, continue to meet monthly with a range of internal and external stakeholders to whom the Standards apply. Focus is on increasing awareness of the Standards and promoting them through communication and engagement.

## **Annual report**

We are also now drafting our annual report, which is additional to the Quarterly reporting, and which will seek to go into more detail about the context and trends and progress with implementation and training. It is also planned to have a short summary or infographic for sharing with colleagues and other stakeholders in an accessible format. This will be presented in the July and August meeting cycle.

### **Future reporting timescales**

The future cycle of reporting is expected to be as follows:

<b>Quarter</b>	<b>Period covered</b>	<b>Staff Governance Committee</b>	<b>NHS Highland Board meeting</b>	<b>Argyll &amp; Bute IJB</b>
<b>Q4 2021/2</b>	1 January - 31 March 2022	4 May 2022	31 May 2022	25 May 2022
<b>Annual report</b>	1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022	6 July 2022	26 July 2022	24 August 2022
<b>Q1 2022/3</b>	1 April - 30 June 2022	7 September 2022	27 September 2022	21 September 2022
<b>Q2 2022/3</b>	1 July - 30 September 2022	9 November 2022	29 November 2022	23 November 2022

## **2.4 Proposed level of Assurance**

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

This report proposes moderate assurance is taken, with the refinement of our processes making good progress. Our outstanding cases are substantial and complex but are being taken seriously and we are working with those involved. However, it is recognised that further work is needed to implement the audit actions, continue with promotion of awareness and training and to ensure cases are progressed in a timely manner.

## **3 Impact Analysis**

### **3.1 Quality/ Patient Care**

The Whistleblowing Standards are designed to support timely and appropriate reporting of concerns in relation to Quality and Patient Care and ensure we take action to address and resolve these.

### **3.2 Workforce**

Our workforce has additional protection in place under these standards.

### **3.3 Financial**

The Whistleblowing Standards also offer another route for addressing allegations of a financial nature.

### **3.4 Risk Assessment/Management**

The risks of the implementation have been assessed and included. Consideration is being given to where this would sit on our operational and board level risks.

### **3.5 Data Protection**

No data protection issues identified.

### **3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities**

No specific impacts

### **3.7 Other impacts**

None

### **3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement, and consultation**

Duties to involve and engage external stakeholders are carried out where appropriate:

#### **3.8.1 Route to the Meeting**

The report is presented for review and feedback and is also presented to the NHS Highland Board on 31 May 2022.

## **2.4 Recommendation**

- **Discussion** – Examine the draft report and consider any additional information or revisions that may be appropriate
- **Assurance** – To give confidence of compliance with legislation, policy, and Board objectives

## **2.5 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Whistleblowing Report (Quarter 4 - 1 January - 31 March 2022)