

NHS Highland



Meeting: Argyll & Bute Integrated Joint Board
Meeting date: 24 November 2022
Title: Whistleblowing Standards Reports
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Fiona Hogg, Director of People and Culture
Report Author: Fiona Hogg, Director of People and Culture

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Assurance

This report relates to a:

- Legal requirement

This report will align to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

Safe, Effective and Person Centred

This report relates to the following Strategic Outcome(s)

Start Well	Thrive Well		Stay Well		Anchor Well	
Grow Well	Listen Well	X	Nurture Well	X	Plan Well	
Care Well	Live Well		Respond Well		Treat Well	
Journey Well	Age Well		End Well		Value Well	
Perform well	Progress well					

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

Attached are the Whistleblowing Standards Q1 report (April - June 2022) and Q2 report (July - September 2022) as well as the final version of the Annual Report and Abridged Annual report covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, which was the first year of the standards.

These are provided to give assurance to the IJB of our programme and performance against the Whistleblowing Standards which have been in place since April 2021.

2.2 Background

All NHS Scotland organisations including Integrated Joint Boards and Health and Social Care Partnership 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 and relevant Committees and IJBs, on an annual basis, in addition to quarterly reports.

2.3 Assessment

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

Considerable thought and engagement has gone into the Annual Whistleblowing Standards report over recent months, to ensure that the report is comprehensive and easy to access, as well as covering all the requirements set out above.

The report is designed to be able to read in its entirety, but also to provide a shortened version for colleagues which will include the infographic and executive summary, along with the links to past reports and the contact and information page.

Bert Donald, our Whistleblowing Non-Executive Director has been involved in the review and shaping of the report, along with input from a range of colleagues, the Area Partnership Forum and Staff Governance Committee. Bert also carried out another series of visits across Argyll & Bute in October 2022 to promote the Whistleblowing Standards and encourage speaking up.

The annual reports were extensively referenced and shared during our Speak Up Week activities from 3 - 7 October 2022.

During Speak Up week, our Guardians, who act as our Whistleblowing Confidential Contacts, travelled extensively across the Board area promoting Speaking Up and the Whistleblowing Standards. Our INWO liaison held daily sessions and recorded these on key topics such as Speaking Up, Praising and Positive feedback, Listening and responding to concerns, Quality, care and Safety concerns and a round up of all the weeks key messages and activity. There was also a series of local and national resources, press releases and social media postings shared.

We are working on our own internal Whistleblowing policy guidance, as part of the final audit action, but as we are now involved in developing national guidance and tools as part of a working group, we have paused our local activity. The Q1 Whistleblowing report for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 July 2022 and the Q2 Whistleblowing report for the period 1 August 2022 to 31 October 2022 are included in the pack for assurance review. We have seen new cases raised and a number of cases concluded, but we continue to focus on improving our timescales to resolve cases.

We continue to receive and progress cases and are now considering how we can start to add learnings and trends to the reports now we have had a few more cases to report on and will include this in the Q3 report.

The Quarter 3 report will be available for the March 2023 meeting.

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"/>

Comment on the level of assurance

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. It is recognised that further work is needed to implement the final audit action, continue with promotion of awareness and training which began in August 2022, as well as enhanced reporting now we have more data and to continue progress made to ensure cases are progressed in a timely manner and we are targeting giving substantial assurance with the next report in March 2023.

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

The report does not involve personally identifiable information.

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:

3.9 Route to the Meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

The Annual report was presented in draft format for feedback and comments at Area Partnership Forum on 26 August 2022 and the Staff Governance Committee on 7 September 2022.

The final papers were presented as below:

- Annual report and Q1 report - NHS Highland Board, 27 September 2022
- Annual Report, Q1 and Q2 report - Area Partnership Forum on 28 October 2022
- Annual Report, Q1 and Q2 report - Staff Governance Committee on 9 November 2022

4 Recommendation

- **Assurance** – To give confidence of compliance with legislation, policy and Board objectives.

4.1 List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

- Appendix 1 – Annual Whistleblowing Report 2021/2
- Appendix 2 - Summary Annual Whistleblowing Report 2021/2
- Appendix 3 - Quarterly WB report, April - June 2022
- Appendix 4 - Quarterly WB report July - September 2022