

NHS Highland



Meeting: Argyll & Bute Joint Integration Board
Meeting date: 29 March 2023
Title: Whistleblowing Standards Report
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 is the Whistleblowing Standards Quarter 3 report covering the period October – December 2022.

This is provided to give assurance to the Board of our 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 IJB 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.

Bert Donald, our Whistleblowing Non-Executive Director has carried out another series of visits, this time to the Inverness, Aviemore and Nairn areas at the end of last year. These visits are well received and give useful feedback on colleague experiences and awareness of the Standards.

We know we have more to do to ensure widespread knowledge of the Standards across our vast board area and how to raise concerns and importantly how to address these quickly and effectively, not just through formal processes, although that is one component, Our NHS Highland Corporate Induction launched in February 2023 and is another opportunity to raise awareness with new colleagues as they join the organisation.

Fiona Hogg has been involved in developing a national toolkit to support colleagues, managers, HR and confidential contacts who may have involvement in Whistleblowing cases. The draft guidance has been created and the final version should be ready in April 2023. NHS Highland will plan training and awareness for managers, HR, staffside and colleagues around the launch date and will then finalise our own process guidance with that material being in place and available.

The promotion and ongoing development of our whistleblowing, listening and speak up services is a core element of the Together We Care Strategy and Annual Delivery Plan as well as the aims and values of the Argyll & Bute Strategic plan.

In the Q3 Whistleblowing report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2022 we had no new cases raised and 3 cases concluded. We continue to focus on improving our timescales to resolve cases and ensuring the 20 day updates are complied with.

We have started to add some more information on actions and learnings and to see what additional data we can collect and we are looking at further breakdowns of the categories we use, to give more insight to the concerns being raised, however, with no new cases reported this period, we couldn't initiate that element.

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

Quarter	Period covered	Staff Governance Committee	NHS Highland Board	Argyll & Bute IJB
Q4 22-23	1 January - 31 March 2023	10 May 2023	30 May 2023	31 May 2023
Annual Report 22-23	1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023	28 June 2023	26 July 2023	30 August 2023
Q1 23-24	1 April - 30 June 2023	6 September 2023	27 September 2023	30 August 2023

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 as well as enhanced reporting 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 May 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.

This report has previously been to the Staff Governance Committee on 8 March, the NHS Highland Board on 28 March, and will be seen by the Area Partnership Forum at their April meeting.

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- Quarterly WB report October – December 2022