

Case Study



Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust Freedom to Speak Up Guardian recommends WorkInConfidence Anonymous Speak Up as powerful route for raising concerns

THE CLIENT

Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust has approximately 4,900 staff covering a large area from Weston Super Mare to Salisbury in Wiltshire, including Bath, Bristol South and Gloucestershire. The Trust offers a variety of mental health services which are extremely complex and supports a diverse range of the population it covers.

Liz Bessant is the Trust's Freedom to Speak Up Guardian as well as Regional Guardian, covering the South West.

THE JOURNEY

Liz Bessant is a full-time Freedom to Speak Up Guardian working alongside leaders to promote an open and transparent culture at Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust to enable staff to come forward and speak up about any concerns, ideas of anything they would like to raise. The Trust were reviewing ways for staff to come forward via different channels to enhance speaking up. Liz heard about WorkInConfidence from the HR Director via the HR Directors Forum and also from others who had used WorkInConfidence previously.

Demonstrations were arranged and Liz was a key decision maker in the implementation [WorkInConfidence Anonymous Speak Up](#).

IMPLEMENTING WORKINCONFIDENCE

WorkInConfidence Anonymous Speak Up was rolled out in 2022 using effective communications channels such as FTSU monthly feature on the staff intranet, FTSU posters and cards printed up with Freedom to Speak Up contact details on one side and WorkInConfidence details on the other side, including a QR code with a link to the system. As well as that, the Guardian and all 111 Freedom to Speak Up Champions have a link to the WorkInConfidence web app on their email signatures.

BENEFITS

Liz believes that having WorkInConfidence Anonymous Speak Up channel helps relieve the anxiety people feel a lot of the time and the worry that they might suffer detriment as a result of coming forward.

Raising concerns anonymously has helped more people feel confident in coming forward, that they are being listened to and, that something will happen. It's been a great way to introduce people to speaking up and helping the Trust improve their preventive initiatives. Trying to help people to do the right thing, to report it and how to report it is so important.

"As a Guardian, I like that I get daily notifications if I have a conversation waiting. It's very, very easy to use, and I can also keep an eye on the status of conversations with other champions in the system at a high level" - Liz Bessant

LIZ BESSANT, FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP GUARDIAN

"WorkInConfidence anonymous reporting channel is quick and easy to use. Like any new system, it takes time for people to learn to trust that it is confidential.

The app is very secure and anonymous so no-one knows who the person raising the matter is, but they can still put down the detail of what they've witnessed and want to report - and are listened to. There is also a means to get back to the anonymous individual.

The most important thing for us is to get people speaking up and the two-way anonymous reporting channel provides this extra level of security for our staff to come forward"

ONBOARDING AND SUPPORT FROM WORKINCONFIDENCE

"WorkInConfidence are hugely supportive and a great team to work with, offering lots of guidance and support throughout the onboarding process which has continued since we went live. Giving help with any clarifications and quick response times. The training we had was fantastic and WorkInConfidence attended some of our forums during the onboarding period, which was really helpful.

We rolled out in April 2022 and used multiple communication channels to launch the WorkInConfidence platform via internal emails, intranet and posters detailing all the available ways staff can raise concerns here at Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

I would say we have an excellent working relationship with the WorkInConfidence team. We have a dedicated Client Success Manager with whom we have regular catch-ups, we share feedback and propose product enhancements which the team notify us of when a new release comes out which is great and we feel listened to.

The plan for Avon & Wiltshire is to continue to promote WorkInConfidence anonymous speak up as an additional channel to raise concerns and make sure everyone feels safe to speak up.

IN SUMMARY

"My recommendation would be that other Trusts and organisations should consider implementing WorkInConfidence Anonymous Speak Up as an additional secure, independent route for staff to raise concerns.

It's a great system, quick and easy to implement and extremely cost effective, which I was surprised by. The user experience is simplistic and very clear which I believe helps when people may be experiencing high levels of anxiety.

Things don't change overnight. It takes continual promotion and awareness - however we do believe that many people have come forward with concerns which might not have been raised if we didn't have an anonymous channel to report them on.

If a Trust has a part-time Guardian, this route is ideal due to the admin control functionality and delegation options, so other qualified and authorised personnel can be available to help answer concerns raised.

You should have as many routes available as possible to help staff come forward and do the right thing, and an independent, anonymous reporting channel definitely helps to enable staff to come forward early, before the problems escalate. We get to hear about it before the staff go off sick or leave and the Trust is in a better position to take preventative action - that's the key". - *Liz Bessant, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust and Chair for the South West Guardians Network.*

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