

SpeakInConfidence: Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The Client

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was established in 2004 as one of the UK's first foundation trusts. It operates with the vision, Best Care for Everyone, and aims to achieve this by putting patients at the centre of excellent specialist healthcare. As a response to the views of patients and staff, the Trust defined six core values of listening, helping, excelling, improving, uniting and caring, which underpin the vision.

The Challenge

When Director of HR Dave Smith arrived at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, he described a detached relationship between head office and staff, with undertones of an "us and them" scenario. *"There was a growing feeling that we needed to move the dial to something where the raising of concerns was a routine matter for staff, rather than something they did in a crisis,"* Dave said.

While the Trust had always presented a variety of ways for staff to resolve issues, the policies on paper were not necessarily instilling the reassurance and confidence to speak up. Gloucester Hospitals' annual staff surveys were indicating that staff were aware of the means available to raise concerns, but they did not feel they were secure in doing so. It was also apparent that they needed to know the issue was being acted upon.

It became a priority for Gloucestershire Hospitals to find a secure system that enabled anonymity and would lead to routine discussions between staff and management.

The Solution

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust became interested in **SpeakInConfidence** after hearing about the system in a presentation. The ability to launch a dialogue and continue the conversation within a safe and secure environment seemed like an ideal solution for encouraging staff to speak up more readily.

"People are able to post their comments, know that nobody can see who they are, and are promised a response and a continuation of the dialogue until everyone is satisfied," Dave remarked, *"the very simplicity of SpeakInConfidence is what attracted us."*

As with any new procedure, there was apprehension about how staff would respond to **SpeakInConfidence**, but its user-friendly interface has been well received by staff and managers across the Trust.

Gloucestershire Hospitals 
NHS Foundation Trust



Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is responsible for the two largest hospitals in the county, Cheltenham General and Gloucestershire Royal Hospitals, as well as Stroud Maternity Unit.

These specialist hospitals provide emergency care, specialist inpatient care and outpatient appointments to the urban and rural communities within Gloucestershire and further afield.

As one of the UK's first foundation trusts, Gloucestershire Hospitals takes pride in its engagement with Members and has an active and involved Council of Governors helping the Trust to be more responsive to the needs and wishes of the local community.

“ **SpeakInConfidence** has given a voice to departments that may have felt that they were unable to speak up before. ”

The Results

Since introducing **SpeakInConfidence**, many staff members at Gloucestershire Hospitals have been using the system for raising queries and concerns. This has helped management to triangulate particular issues, combining what was already known with concerns raised on **SpeakInConfidence**, to reach more informed solutions.

SpeakInConfidence has also given a voice to departments which may not have chosen to raise issues before. *“**SpeakInConfidence** has helped us to shine a light on certain areas of the organisation, particularly highlighting areas where we can give support to managers,”* Dave said.

“ I would recommend **SpeakInConfidence** to any organisation that’s serious about changing its culture and finding out what staff are really thinking. ”

The Reward

For Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, **SpeakInConfidence** was launched to give staff the opportunity to speak up securely before an issue reached the crisis stage. Previously, staff had the option to submit an anonymous letter, but this allowed only for a one-way conversation. Now that staff are able to raise concerns anonymously, with the promise of a continued discussion with management, the Trust is able to pinpoint and resolve issues before they escalate.

*“**SpeakInConfidence** has given us an insight into the challenges and difficulties that staff face,”* Dave explained, *“giving us an opportunity to make interventions at an earlier stage, which may not have happened without the system.”*

Watch a video interview with Dave Smith here:

<https://sic.gd/davesmith>

