

# NHS Ayrshire & Arran

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 12 August 2024</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Whistleblowing Annual Report 2023-2024</b>
<b>Responsible Director:</b>	<b>Jennifer Wilson, Nurse Director</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Karen Callaghan, Corporate Governance Coordinator</b>

## 1. Purpose

This is presented to the NHS Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Scottish Government policy

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

## 2. Report summary

### 2.1 Situation

The NHS Board is asked to receive and discuss this report on organisational activity in relation to whistleblowing for 2023-2024.

### 2.2 Background

Each NHS Board is required to provide an annual report to provide assurance that the Board has discharged its role as set out in The National Whistleblowing Standards.

Once approved by the NHS Board, the report is submitted to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO).

### 2.3 Assessment

The report summarises and builds on the quarterly reports produced by the board, including performance against the requirements of the Standards, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the issues that have been raised and the actions that have been or will be taken to improve services as a result of concerns. The report provides a

range of information to provide assurance to Governance Committee and Board members on our implementation and compliance with the Standards.

### **Key Messages**

- An 'At a glance' infographic provides a summary of key findings for 2023/24 at the beginning of the report.
- Several areas of improvement identified and implemented following whistleblowing investigations.
- A short anonymous survey was used to provide a snap shot of staff awareness on how to raise concerns. The outcome being that 70% of staff are confident on how to do so.
- To date 66% of managers have accessed and completed the Turas Learn modules.
- Following a benchmarking exercise against other territorial Boards 2022/23 annual reports, it is reassuring to note the number of stage 1 and 2 concerns received by Boards of a comparable size to NHS Ayrshire & Arran are low, this provided assurance the NHS Ayrshire and Arran are not an outlier.
- Speak Up Week afforded the opportunity to further promote the whistleblowing process, the new Confidential Contacts, Speak Up Advocates and the training available.
- Our plans for 2024-2025 and exploring new ways to gain feedback and improve communication across all staff groups.

#### **2.3.1 Quality/patient care**

An open and transparent whistleblowing process ensures good-quality outcomes for cases raised through a thorough but proportionate investigation. The approach to handling whistleblowing concerns ensures that learning and improvement is progressed for upheld whistleblowing concerns and are shared across all relevant services.

#### **2.3.2 Workforce**

The Standards support our ambition for an open and honest organisational culture where staff have the confidence to speak up and all voices are heard. This is focused through our organisational Values of 'Caring, Safe and Respectful' and promoting a culture of psychological safety.

#### **2.3.3 Financial**

There are no financial implications as a result of this annual report.

#### **2.3.4 Risk assessment/management**

Failure to have in place an open and honest whistleblowing process that delivers the requirements of The National Whistleblowing Standards could have an impact as valid concerns about quality, safety or malpractice may not be raised. The opportunity to investigate and address these concerns will have been lost, with potentially adverse impact on quality, safety and effectiveness of services in NHS Ayrshire & Arran. There is also a wider risk to organisational integrity and reputation if staff do not believe they will be listened to and do not feel senior leaders in NHS Ayrshire & Arran are fulfilling the organisation's Values of 'Caring, Safe and Respectful' and promoting a culture of Psychological Safety.

#### **2.3.5 Equality and diversity, including health inequalities**

This is an annual report on organisational activity in relation to whistleblowing and an impact assessment is not required for the report. A local Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) which assesses the impact of the Standards on staff and those who provide services is available on our [public facing webpage](#).

### 2.3.6 Other impacts

This will support the requirements of the National Whistleblowing Standards.

- **Best value:** Governance and accountability and Performance management. The delivery of an effective process for whistleblowing concerns will support the Board's commitment to safe, effective and person-centred care. Effective handling of concerns supports the delivery of the Healthcare Quality Strategy .
- **Compliance with Corporate Objectives** - Create compassionate partnerships between patients, their families and those delivering health and care services which respect individual needs and values; and result in the people using our services having a positive experience of care to get the outcome they expect.

### 2.3.7 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

There is no requirement for formal engagement with external stakeholders to produce this annual report.

### 2.3.8 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.

- Whistleblowing Oversight Group on 11 July 2024
- Staff Governance Committee on 01 August 2024.

## 2.4 Recommendation

For discussion. NHS Board Members are asked to discuss this Annual Report on organisational activity in relation to whistleblowing complaints April 2023 – March 2024 and confirm they are assured by the performance reported and future plans to review and improve our processes in accordance with the Standards.

## 3. List of appendices

Appendix 1 – NHS Ayrshire & Arran Whistleblowing Annual Report 2023-2024.