

NHS Ayrshire & Arran

Meeting:	Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Meeting date:	Monday 15 August 2022
Title:	Whistleblowing Report – Quarter 1, April to 30 June 2022
Responsible Director:	Jennifer Wilson, Nurse Director
Report Author:	Karen Callaghan, Corporate Governance Coordinator

1. Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Discussion

This paper relates to:

- Government policy/directive

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

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

2. Report summary

2.1 Situation

The National Whistleblowing Standards and Once for Scotland Whistleblowing policy (the Standards) were introduced on 1 April 2021. Board Members are asked to discuss the report on organisational activity in relation to Whistleblowing concerns raised in 2022-23 Quarter 1 (April – 30 June 2022).

2.2 Background

The National Whistleblowing Standards (the Standards) set out how the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO) expects all NHS Boards to manage, record and report whistleblowing concerns. It is a requirement of the Standards that whistleblowing data is reported quarterly to the NHS Board and under our local governance arrangements to Staff Governance Committee.

The Standards also require that Boards publish an annual report setting out performance in handling whistleblowing concerns. The annual 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.

In NHS Ayrshire & Arran the agreed governance route for reporting on whistleblowing is to Staff Governance Committee and then to the NHS Board. The NHS Board report will be shared with Integration Joint Boards following the NHS Board meeting.

2.3 Assessment

As zero Whistleblowing concerns were received in Quarter 1 (Q1) a detailed report is not possible therefore a short update on recent whistleblowing activity to support the standards is provided below. The first Annual report for Whistleblowing will be submitted to Staff Governance committee and the NHS Board in August 2022.

- **Communications:** The first [Whistleblowing Annual Newsletter](#) was produced to mark the anniversary of one year since the Standards were introduced. An annual newsletter will be produced going forward. This included messages from the Executive Lead Nurse Director, our Whistleblowing Champion Sukhomoy Das and the INWO. Jennifer Wilson, Executive Lead Nurse Director also featured in a video talking about The Standards [Whistleblowing - YouTube](#). Both have been shared with staff via the Daily Digest and eNews and emailed to managers for dissemination and discussion with staff. Whistleblowing communications have been and will continue to be refreshed in the coming months. These will remind staff how to raise a WB concerns and include refreshed and updated 7 minute briefings.
- **Improvement plans:** Table 1 shows status of investigations from concerns raised in 2021-22. Of five completed investigations, four required improvement plans and one required a learning plan. These are monitored through Directorate Governance routes with feedback on closure to the Whistleblowing Oversight Group.

Number Investigations closed	Numbers of Improvement Plans		Number of Learning Plans	
	In Progress	Closed	In Progress	Closed
5	3	1	1	

Table 1

- **An Internal Audit (IA) into Compliance with Whistleblowing Policies and Procedures - April 2022:** Feedback from the IA review was positive with one advisory action noted, this is related to the uptake of Turas Whistleblowing training modules within the organisation. The internal report and recommendations will be monitored via Staff Governance Committee.
- **Staff Awareness (Pulse Survey):** An all staff survey is being developed. This will help us gauge staff awareness of the Whistleblowing process and will provided information on areas where we need to target. We plan to issue this at the end of the summer.
- **Training:** The INWO recently reviewed the Whistleblowing training modules and advised that these have been updated with the addition of a module for line managers who do not investigate Whistleblowing concerns. This information was shared with Staff via the Daily Digest and eNews and emailed to managers for dissemination.
- **Review of processes:** A review of our processes is underway to reflect on year one since the introduction of the Standards, to ensure that any improvements can be

identified and where required changes proposed. The review is considering local arrangements, best practice from other Boards and feedback from INWO via the national Practitioners Forum which is attended by the Corporate Governance/ Whistleblowing Coordinator and Head of Corporate Governance. Any proposals for change will be submitted to Staff Governance committee and Board for support and agreement.

2.3.1 Quality

Procedures for raising concerns should provide good-quality outcomes 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 is no financial impact.

2.3.4 Risk assessment/management

If staff do not have confidence in the fairness of the procedures through which their concerns are raised, or do not feel assured that concerns raised will be acted upon, there is a risk that they will not raise valid concerns about quality, safety or malpractice. The opportunity to investigate and address these concerns will have been lost, with potentially adverse impact on quality, safety and effectiveness of services.

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

A local Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) for the Standards is in place and published on our [public facing web](#). This assesses the impact of the Whistleblowing Standards on staff and those who provide services on behalf of the NHS with protected characteristics.

2.3.6 Other impacts

- **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 in relation to the formulation of this paper. There has been wide communication of the Standards across the organisation.

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 28 July 2022
- Staff Governance Committee on 8 August 2022

2.4 Recommendation

The Board are asked to discuss the paper for Quarter 1 (April – 30 June 2022).