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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	19 May 2022	Agenda Item	5.4
Report Title	The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report, 2021-22		
Report Author	Julie Lloyd, OD & Staff Experience Manager		
Report Sponsor	Debbie Eyitayo, Director for Workforce & OD		
Presented by	Julie Lloyd, OD & Staff Experience Manager		
Freedom of Information	Open		
Purpose of the Report	The purpose of this paper is to provide an end of year report for the period of 1 st April 2021 to 31 st March 2022 from The Guardian Service Ltd.		
Key Issues	<p>There is significant research, which confirms that a positive staff experience in Health Care links to positive outcomes and experience for our patients. Staff being able to raise concerns in a confidential and safe way is an important part of enabling staff to feel happy and engaged in work, supports staff retention and will help us to keep improving our services to patients and the working environment for our staff. This could not be more prevalent in the current post pandemic climate and the need to progress organisational recovery and sustainability.</p> <p>The Guardian Service has been available as an additional way for staff, students and volunteers to raise work-related concerns independently, anonymously and 24/7 within SBUHB since May 2019 and it continues to be an integral part of implementing our culture change programme and supporting our Health Board Values to become a lived experience for all.</p> <p>In evaluating the impact of the Guardian Service Ltd to date and for the last 12 months, the following points should be noted as key deliverables/outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of an independent, safe, confidential, bilingual service for staff, volunteers and students to raise any work-related concerns • Available 24/7, 365 days a year - majority of contacts are reported to want to meet outside of work hours • As a Health Board, we listened to staff and delivered what they asked for • The number of staff raising concerns and speaking up has significantly increased (from the former 		

	<p>internal process – only 5 concerns raised between November 2018 and May 2019)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress towards our aim of creating a culture of openness and honesty, with 74.32% of contacts wanting to keep their concern confidential within the remit of the Guardian Service (an improvement of 20% in the last 12 months). • Number of concerns raised aligned to the 100 projected per year for the size of the organisation (96 by the end of the first 12 months). See Table 1 below for a comparison of activity by financial year to date. It shows how the service is continuing to be accessed with dips in access aligned to waves of the pandemic and staff capacity over the last 2 years. • 231 staff listened to/spoken up and or sign posted in confidence (May 2019 to March 2022) • 178 concerns resolved/closed (77% of total concerns raised from May 2019 to March 2022) • Provides an infrastructure to support and deliver the All Wales 'Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns' and the expectation to improve raising concerns across NHS Wales by Welsh Government • Compliant with the Welsh Active Offer with the service now available to contacts in Welsh. • The service is positively received by those contacts completing the anonymous feedback forms after using the service and raising a concern. • This year, there have been 104 promotional/communications visits (including evenings and weekends). <p>Appendix 1 provides the latest cumulative activity report from the Guardian Service for March 2022 and appendix 2 provides a copy of an End of Year Report from the Guardian Service, including their findings and recommendations for action.</p>			
Specific Action Required (please choose one only)	Information	Discussion	Assurance	Approval
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the up-date and recommendations detailed in the End of Year Report from The Guardian Service for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. 			

The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report, 2021-22

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide an end of year report for the period of 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 from The Guardian Service Ltd.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical Context

There is significant research which confirms that a positive staff experience in Health Care links to positive outcomes and experience for our patients. Staff being able to raise concerns in a confidential and safe way is an important part of enabling staff to feel happy and engaged in work and will help us to keep improving our services to patients and the working environment for our staff. This could not be more prevalent in the current climate of an on-going pandemic and the need to progress organisational recovery and sustainability.

Prior to the Guardian Service being commissioned, there was evidence of the clear need to focus on addressing Bullying within ABMU (our predecessor organisation), in line with improving the experience and wellbeing of our staff and ultimately leading to better patient experience and outcomes. Evidence to support the need to address it included the tragic outcome of an inquest at that time, into the suicide of one of our staff. It was also the significant volume of responses to both the Chief Executive and Director of Workforce & OD's intranet blogs and the volume of e-mails of this nature sent direct to them both, as well as issues reported via Partnership Forum and e-mails received via the Raising Concerns Inbox, previously monitored by the OD & Staff Experience Team.

Both the 2018 and 2020 NHS Wales Staff Survey results also confirmed there is still the need to focus on Healthier Working Relationships and improving behaviours and culture across the organisation and NHS Wales. As a reminder, the 2020 national survey responses were as follows from those who said they had experienced bullying, harassment and abuse from:

- their manager - **9.1%**
- another colleague - **16.2%**
- a member of the public – **14.8%**

2.2 Progress to Date

The Guardian Service has been available as an additional way for staff, students and volunteers to raise work-related concerns independently, anonymously and 24/7 within SBUHB since May 2019 and it continues to be an integral part of implementing our culture change programme and supporting our Health Board Values to become a lived experience for all.

In evaluating the impact of the Guardian Service Ltd cumulatively to date, the following points should be noted as key deliverables/outcomes:

- Provision of an independent, safe, confidential, bilingual service for staff, volunteers and students to raise any work-related concerns
- Available **24/7, 365 days** a year - majority of contacts are reported to want to meet outside of work hours
- As a Health Board, we **listened** to staff and **delivered** what they asked for
- The number of staff raising concerns and speaking up has significantly **increased** (from the former internal process – only **5** concerns raised between November 2018 and May 2019)
- Progress towards our aim of creating a culture of openness and honesty, with **74.32%** of contacts wanting to keep their concern confidential within the remit of the Guardian Service (an **improvement of 20%** in the last 12 months).
- Number of concerns raised in a year aligned to the 100 projected for the size of the organisation (**96** by the end of the first 12 months). See Table 1 below for a comparison of activity by financial year to date. It shows how the service is continuing to be accessed with dips in access aligned to waves of the pandemic and staff capacity over the last 2 years.

Table 1.

Month	Contacts per month 2019-20	Contacts per month 2020-21	Contacts per month 2021-22
May	2	5	10
June	7	8	5
July	6	4	5
August	10	10	5
September	6	5	10
October	10	6	6
November	9	5	8
December	11	4	3
January	6	2	6
February	14	4	4

March	10	8	6
Total for period	91	61	68

- **231 staff** listened to/spoken up and or sign posted in confidence (to date since the service commenced – May 2019 to March 2022).
- **178 concerns resolved/closed** (77% of total concerns raised from May 2019 to March 2022)
- Provides an infrastructure to support and deliver the All Wales '**Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns**' and the expectation to improve raising concerns across NHS Wales by Welsh Government
- Compliant with the Welsh Active Offer with the service now available to contacts in Welsh.
- The service is positively received by those contacts completing the anonymous feedback forms after using the service and raising a concern.

Following presenting the last Guardian Service Activity Report for April 2021 to August 2021 to Executive Team, the subsequent actions have been taken in order to maximise the benefits of the service for SBUHB.

1. Enhanced Communication and Promotion of the Service

A hybrid communication and promotions plan, comprising of both on-site and virtual awareness raising commenced in February 2022, following Government restrictions being lifted. This year, there have been **104 promotional/communications visits** (including evenings and weekends).

In addition, The Guardian Service is promoted via the Health Board's Staff Briefing from the CEO, Virtual Induction for new starters, via Wellbeing, periodically via the quarterly Staff Experience e-Newsletter and via the Staff Experience SharePoint Site, The Guardian Service's dedicated Intranet/staff internet pages, ESR, Datix and via relevant campaigns such as Adult Learners Week and Anti-bullying Week as well as leadership development programmes, such as Footprints, Bridges and REACT Mental Health Training.

New, up-dated promotional material has been produced by The Guardian Service for use and display (infection control compliant) widely across the Health Board. The new resources will be bilingual and include a QR code for staff to quickly and confidentially access details of the service on their personal devices without the need to have access to a work PC or be concerned about being seen writing down the contact details.

Work continues to foster positive relationships with Trade Union Partners and has been reported encouraging from the Guardians, to see some increase in engagement.

2. Duty of Candour

In line with the recent change in legislation, the operational lead has met with the Executive Director of Nursing and those leading on the work in Welsh Government to ensure Swansea Bay UHB is compliant with the Duty of Candour in the operation of the Guardian Service from March 2022. The lead has also ensured connections have been made between the Duty of Candour Leads and the Lead for the National Speak Up Safely Group to ensure there isn't any duplication in the work being taken forward.

3. Visible Leadership and Internal Communications

Whilst the guardians have been complimentary on the responsiveness of our managers when taking a concern to them, concerns were raised by Executive Team on hearing from the most recent Guardian Service Report and discussing the reason that staff use the service. March 2021's report highlighted the main reason was due to staff believing that they won't be listened to (43.94%). March 2022's report however, highlighted the main reason for using the service is due to staff feeling they *have* raised the concern through other Health Board channels, but have not been listened to / nothing has been done (41.89%) and it is worth noting that other reasons for using the service including; fear of damage of career, losing job and reprisal are on the increase.

As a result of sharing similar findings following August's report with Executive Team, an action was raised around the need to focus on visible leadership and internal communications.

Since April 2022, a total of **456** leaders and managers have attended leadership development programmes including; Footprints, Bridges, Managers Pathway, the Consultant Development Programme, Coaching Skills and our recently launched 2-day Courageous Conversations Workshop. During March 2022, **55** managers also attended the 'Civility Saves Lives' sessions currently rolling out to embed the Health Working Relationships agenda and associated Respect & Resolution Policy.

Data is being shared and triangulated on a monthly basis with HR Business Partners and OD Leads, the Patient Feedback Team, Datix, the mediation co-ordinator and the Healthy Working Relationships and Just Project Lead in order to gain a picture of hot spot areas and enable targeted prioritisation of OD support.

2.3 Guardian Service End of Year Report – April 2021 to March 2022

During the last 12 months (1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022) there have been **74 concerns** raised. Importantly, **44 cases (59%)** have been also been resolved/closed during this period in spite of the on-going impact of the pandemic.

A copy of the End of Year report and recommendations from the Guardian Service is provided in appendix 1 and appendix 2 provides a copy of March's cumulative activity.

2.4 Speak Up Safely – Sub-group of Welsh Partnership Forum

The subgroup of Welsh Partnership forum set up to discuss and develop proposals for an All Wales approach to Raising Concerns has received the findings and recommendations from research undertaken by Professor Aled Jones of Cardiff University (see appendix 3 for a copy of his presentation including recommended actions) in relation to Freedom to Speak Up in NHS England (based mainly on internal Speak Up Guardians) which has been further supported by a recent article in the Nursing Times (31st March 2022) that talked about a decline in the speaking up culture in NHS England in spite of it being a mandate and monitoring by the National Guardian Office (NGO).

The sub-group has also undertaken an evaluation into the current/existing arrangements across NHS Wales for staff to speak up and raise concerns, which is to be shared with Welsh Partnership Forum. A framework and toolkit is currently being developed by the sub-group to supplement and enhance the All Wales Procedure for NHS Staff Raising Concerns and this work is to be linked with the Healthy Working Relationship agenda and Just & Learning Culture implementation.

3 GOVERNANCE AND RISK ISSUES

- As we remain the first and only Health Board in Wales to take forward the service, we can only refer to colleagues and Trusts in England that have taken it forward and use it to learn lessons as we continue to monitor and evaluate the service.
- There is still the need to manage perception around the service and educate managers and staff about the service to be clear that this is an additional avenue for staff to reach out in confidence and that it does not replace manager's managing staff, trade union support, HR processes or wellbeing support available.
- As we continue to take a multi-faceted, multi-levelled approach as part of the Healthier Working Relationships agenda, improving partnership working with staff side and developing an organisational culture of openness, honesty and trust, it is difficult to fully evaluate the benefits of The Guardian Service and are unable to attribute reductions in disciplinary and grievance cases purely to the Guardian Service.
- Whilst there may have been a reduction in the number of formal Employee Relations cases, the introduction of the Guardian Service has resulted in further enquiries and investigations for operational HR colleagues to respond to, raised at an earlier stage in the process.
- As previously committed, the Local Partnership Forum will be offered to engage in a full evaluation of the Guardian Service.

4 RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- Note the up-date and recommendations for action detailed in the End of Year Report from The Guardian Service for 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022.

Governance and Assurance		
Link to Enabling Objectives (please choose)	Supporting better health and wellbeing by actively promoting and empowering people to live well in resilient communities	
	Partnerships for Improving Health and Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Co-Production and Health Literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Health and Wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Deliver better care through excellent health and care services achieving the outcomes that matter most to people	
	Best Value Outcomes and High Quality Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Partnerships for Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Excellent Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Digitally Enabled Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outstanding Research, Innovation, Education and Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and Care Standards		
(please choose)	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Effective Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Dignified Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Timely Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Individual Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Staff and Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Quality, Safety and Patient Experience		
<p>The Guardian Service aims to improve staff experience through helping to create a culture of openness and honesty and demonstrate we are listening by responding to what staff asked for. The direct correlation between patient experience and staff experience is well documented.</p> <p>The previous Raising concerns process with no dedicated pathway or infrastructure to support staff creates risk to staff, patients and the wider organisation.</p>		
Legal Implications (including equality and diversity assessment)		
<p>It is important to consider the internal policies and the legislation which are linked to the provision of a confidential, safe and effective pathway and process for staff to raise concerns.</p> <p>Internal policies include but are not limited to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Grievance Policy -Disciplinary Policy -Dignity at Work Policy -Raising Concerns Policy <p>Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998</p> <p>If workers bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain circumstances under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. The law that protects whistle-blowers is for the public interest - so people can speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation. Blowing the whistle is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'.</p>		
Staffing Implications		

Consideration continues to need to be given for the time and resource required for roll-out of the Guardian service and continued education and collaboration with stakeholders i.e. Union representatives, HR, Staff Experience Team, Wellbeing, Communications, Patient Feedback Team and PALS, Executive and Non-Executive Lead.

Long Term Implications (including the impact of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)

Briefly identify how the paper will have an impact of the “The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015”, 5 ways of working.

The paper impacts on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 as it will impact on the long-term culture and behaviours of the organisation and its staff now and in the future. It aims to support staff, through working together to improve staff wellbeing and improve the quality of patient care and outcomes through early intervention and nipping concerns in the bud before they escalate.

Report History

- Presented to Partnership Forum, 18th March 2019 - Addressing concerns around bullying in ABMU – Freedom to Speak up Service & ACAS Training
- Presented to Executive Team, 3rd April 2019 - Enhanced Raising Concerns – Appointment of The Guardian Service Ltd
- Presented to Partnership Forum, 3rd June 2019 - #LivingOurValues campaign
- Presented to Audit Committee – 15th July 2019 – Raising Concerns Report
- Presentation from The Guardian Service Lt, Dr Simon McRory, Founder/Director - 16th July 2019, Special Partnership Forum
- Presented to Partnership Forum, 24th September 2019 - #LivingOurValues & Guardian Service Up-date
- Presented to Senior Leadership Team, 2nd October 2019 - #LivingOurValues & Guardian Service Up-date
- Presented to Local Negotiating Committee, 7th November 2019 – Guardian Service Up-date & #LivingOurValues
- Presented to WOD Forum, 14th November 2019 - Guardian Service up-date & #LivingOurValues
- Presented to Audit Committee, 21st November 2019, Guardian Service & #ShapingSBUHB
- Presented to Senior Leadership Team, 4th December 2019 – Retendering of an independent service for Staff to Raise Work-related Concerns
- Presented to IBG, 19th December 2019 - Retendering of an independent service for Staff to Raise Work-related Concerns
- Presented to Partnership Forum, 13th March 2020 - #LivingOurValues & The Guardian Service Up-date

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented to Partnership Forum, 22nd October 2020 - The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report • Presented to SLT, 4th November 2020 – The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report and Decision to Contract • Presented to Audit Committee, 12th November 2020 – The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report • Presented to Full Board, 26th November 2020 - The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report • Presented to Executive Board, 28th April 2021 – The Guardian Service Ltd End of Year Report • Presented to LNC, 18th May 2021 – The Guardian Service Ltd End of Year Report • Presented to Quality & Safety Committee, 25th May 2021 – The Guardian Service Ltd End of Year Report • Presented to WOD Committee, 15th June 2021 - The Guardian Service Ltd End of Year Report • Presented to Executive Team, 22nd September 2021 - The Guardian Service Ltd. Up-date Report – 1st April 2021 to 31st August 2021 • Presented to WOD Committee, 12th October 2021 – A Deep Dive into the Guardian Service Ltd. • Presented to LNC, 18th January 2022 – Speak Up Safely Up-date
Appendices	1, 2