



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	17 November 2022	Agenda Item	2.4
Report Title	Annual Guardian Service Update for Audit Committee		
Report Author	Natalie Mills, Lead OD Facilitator – OD and Staff Experience Team		
Report Sponsor	Debbie Eyitayo, Director of Workforce and OD		
Presented by	Natalie Mills, Lead OD Facilitator – OD and Staff Experience Team		
Freedom of Information	Open		
Purpose of the Report	The purpose of this paper is to provide an up-date from the Guardian Service Ltd. to the Audit committee for the period 1 st of April 2022 to October 2022, and outline the actions taken to date towards recommendations detailed in their end of year report.		
Key Issues	<p>There is significant research which confirms that a positive staff experience in Health Care links to positive outcomes and improved quality of care for our patients. Staff being able to raise concerns in a confidential and safe way is an important part of enabling staff to feel well 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, transformation 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 last 6 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 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • 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 for the same period by financial year to date. • 256 staff listened to/spoken up and or sign posted in confidence (May 2019 to October 2022) • 190 concerns resolved/closed (74% of total concerns raised to date, May 2019 to August 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 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 (please see appendix 1). • There have been a total of 63 promotional/communications activities (including evenings, weekends and bank holidays) between April and October 2022. <p>Appendix 2 provides the cumulative activity report from the Guardian Service for September 2022 and appendix 3 provides a high-level dashboard detailing some of the triangulation with wider Workforce data.</p>			
Specific Action Required <i>(please choose one only)</i>	Information <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Assurance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approval <input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations	Members are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the annual up-date from the Guardian Service for 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022. • Note the actions taken to date, towards recommendations detailed in their end of year report. 			

Annual Guardian Service Update for Audit Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide an up-date from the Guardian Service Ltd. to the Audit Committee for the period of April to October 2022, and outline the actions taken to date towards recommendations detailed in their end of year report.

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 improved quality of care for our patients. Staff being able to raise concerns in a confidential and safe way is an important part of enabling staff to feel well 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, transformation 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%**

a. 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)
- 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 for the same period, by financial year to date.
- **256 staff** listened to/spoken up and or sign posted in confidence (May 2019 to September 2022)
- **190 concerns resolved/closed** (74% of total concerns raised to date, May 2019 to August 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 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 (please see appendix 1).
- There have been a total of **57 promotional/communications activities** (including evenings, weekends and bank holidays) between April and September 2022.

Table 1.

Month	Contacts per month 2019-20	Contacts per month 2020-21	Contacts per month 2021-22	Contacts per month 2022-23
April	N/A	5	5	3
May	2	5	10	4
June	7	8	5	3
July	6	4	5	6

August	10	10	5	4
September	6	5	10	5
Total for period	31	37	40	25

i. The Guardian Service Cumulative Report, October 2022 – Key Points

- There has been a steady average of 4 contacts per month during the current reporting year to date (April to October 2022)
- The number of contacts is lower than during the same period in previous reporting years, however this is also reflected in other areas such as up-take of leadership and wellbeing programmes and sessions and our staff recognition events, so we need to consider the current climate across the organisation.
- In September we saw the first concern of Bullying and Harassment coming through and management issues remain the most common theme for contacting the service (April to October 2022)
- Whilst we had seen positive progress towards our aim of creating a culture of openness and honesty, with less contacts wanting to keep their concern confidential at the end of the last reporting year (reducing from 94% to 74% year), this year is currently reporting at 80%. In terms of reasons for using the service, fear of reprisal is up from 3.33% last year to 15% this year, so are points to note and keep an eye on.

b. Actions Taken Towards Guardian Service Recommendations

The following table outlines a summary of the recommendations from the Guardian Service End of Year Report and the actions that have either been taken or are in progress, along with who is responsible for their delivery.

Table 2.

Recommendation	Action	Who and Timeline
There has been a marked increase in staff believing that they have raised the concern before but have not been listened to / nothing has been done. The figures would suggest that the organisation has much work to do dealing with long standing issues that maybe	Since April 2022 to August 2022, a total of 394 leaders and managers have attended or are currently attending leadership development programmes including; Footprints, Bridges, the Consultant Development Programme, Coaching Skills and our recently launched Managing Change and 2-day	Service Groups, all levels of managers and Workforce & OD, on-going until 31 st March 2023

<p>due to the pandemic have not been addressed.</p> <p>Fully embed SBU values across the organisation with a view of improving culture and behaviours.</p>	<p>Courageous Conversations Workshops.</p> <p>175 new starters have completed our virtual Values Led Corporate Induction Programme.</p> <p>Data is being shared and triangulated on a monthly basis with HR Business Partners and OD Leads, the Patient Feedback Team, Datix and the mediation co-ordinator to gain a picture of hot spot areas and enable targeted prioritisation of OD support. Appendix 3 provides a high-level dashboard detailing some of the triangulation with wider Workforce data.</p> <p>Awareness sessions have been arranged at most leadership forums across Service Groups, as well as Grand Round to communicate about the Guardian Service and what we know from our experience of using the service so far. There have been a total of 63 promotional/communications activities (including evenings, weekends and bank holidays) between April and September 2022.</p> <p>Promotion of national 'Speak Up Month' in October 2022, making links with world Mental Health Day and including sessions with our Mediators, Chaplains, Guardian Service and Civility Saves Lives, link to our values and providing an introduction to the Respect & Resolution Policy.</p> <p>Interview and appointment of 'The Big Conversation and OD</p>	<p>Workforce & OD, service groups, between July and November 2022</p> <p>Learning, OD & Staff Experience, Wellbeing, Mediators, Chaplaincy, the Guardians, October 2022</p> <p>Workforce & OD, Trade Union Partners, Service</p>
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	<p>Culture Project Lead' to lead the culture programme of work, which will progress through an informed, co-productive 'big conversation' style staff engagement programme.</p> <p>Integrate the Guardian Service and wider options of support into service transformation plans as a way of promoting a culture of speaking up and being able to learn from staff concerns.</p>	<p>Groups, all managers and staff, Autumn 2022 on-going.</p> <p>Workforce & OD, Service Groups</p>
<p>While the commitment of the Board and Executive team at Swansea Bay University Health Board to the Guardian Service has been excellent, consideration should be given to publicising personal commitments from each member with regard to "raising concerns" in order to further cement to staff that the Board/Executive team are committed to the "Raising Concerns" Policy.</p>	<p>Build in Board and Executive Team commitment statements as part of communication and promotion of the national speak up safely launch during Autumn 2022 as well as national campaigns such as anti-bullying week and safeguarding week in November 2022.</p> <p>Executives and Senior leaders have signed personal pledges in support of national speak up month and have had photos taken to support our Twitter campaign throughout the month. The Director of Workforce & OD is also quoted as part of an article, featuring in Bay News and a bulletin article promoting the campaign.</p>	<p>Workforce & OD & Corporate Communications, October/November 2022</p>
<p>A series of 1-1 meetings should be arranged with each member of the Board and Executive Team, further strengthening the understanding of the Service as an agent for change working with the organisation for the betterment of staff.</p>	<p>Awareness and promotion of the service and escalation protocol via Executive Team, Audit Committee, Workforce & OD Committee, LNC on a quarterly, 6-monthly and annual basis, as well as via the on-call rota.</p>	<p>Workforce & OD, Executive Team, Service Group Directors, on-going</p>
<p>A continued focus on reducing the number of "open" Guardian Service cases</p>	<p>The Guardians hold regular reviews with their operational manager to go through each contact and follow up the position.</p>	<p>SBU's Independent Guardians, on-going</p>

	<p>Progress is however very much determined by the individual contact and whether they wish to escalate. It is also determined by the responsiveness of line managers where a concern has been agreed to escalate.</p>	
<p>The issue of staff turnover is common theme from staff and there needs to be a concerted effort to publicise to staff the considerable extent of the efforts being undertaken to recruit new staff while ensuring that the programmes to retain and value existing staff continue. There is still work to do to educate around the recruitment activity that is taking place.</p> <p>Focus is needed to improve consistency of policy with regard to exit interviews across the Health Board to avoid learning and improvement opportunities being missed.</p>	<p>Newly formed Resourcing & Retention team in place, focusing on the promotion and marketing of Swansea Bay as an employer of choice. All communication media (including social media) used to promote vacancies, spotlighting vacancies of the week and supporting applicants/potential applicants with useful information.</p> <p>Retention group now in place looking at developing and roll out of a retention plan</p> <p>Plans to work with Hywel Dda Health Board to understand their 'Thinking of Leaving' process and adoption within Swansea Bay are underway.</p>	<p>Workforce & OD, on-going</p> <p>Workforce & OD, Autumn/Winter 2022</p>
<p>Continue to improve the length of time it takes to process formal Employee Relations cases.</p>	<p>Staff Side partners and HR colleagues received training on the new Respect & Resolution Policy during 2021/22.</p> <p>To date, 387 managers also attended the 'Civility Saves Lives' sessions currently rolling out to embed the Health Working Relationships agenda and associated Respect & Resolution Policy.</p> <p>There is currently work taking place on the new Workforce & OD SharePoint site for staff, where Speaking Up Safely will have a dedicated, easy access section and see the</p>	<p>Workforce & OD, Trade Union Partners, all managers, on-going until 31st March 2023</p> <p>Workforce & OD Intranet SharePoint Delivery Group, July 2022</p>

	integration/offering of support available providing clarity on where to go.	
A continued programme of communication and engagement sessions is required to promote the Guardian Service to all staff groups wherever they are located.	<p>There have been a total of 63 promotional/communications activities (including evenings, weekends and bank holidays) between April and September 2022.</p> <p>The Guardian Service along with other staff support services are 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.</p> <p>Awareness sessions currently on-going at all local leadership forums to communicate about the Guardian Service and what we know from our experience of using the service so far.</p> <p>New, up-dated promotional material has been produced and is being disseminated across Service Groups 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</p>	<p>The Guardian Service, Workforce & OD, Corporate Communications</p> <p>Workforce & OD & The Guardian Service, 15th July 2022</p> <p>Sign off from Service Groups and co-ordination via the Guardians Service & OD and Staff Experience Manager</p>

	their personal devices without the need to have access to a work PC or be concerned about being seen writing down the contact details.	
Increase engagement and partnership working between the Guardian Service and Trade Union Partners	Work continues to foster positive relationships with Trade Union Partners and has been reported encouraging from the Guardians, to see some increase in engagement.	Director of Workforce & OD and Chair of Health Board Partnership Forum, on-going

2.3 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 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 finalised 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, Just & Learning Culture implementation.

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. 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 formal 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 and be an integral part of the wider speaking up safely agenda.

4. RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- **Note** the up-date from the Guardian Service for 1st April 2022 to 31st August 2022.
- **Note** the actions taken to date, towards recommendations detailed in their end of year report.

Governance and Assurance		
Link to Enabling Objectives <i>(please choose)</i>	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		
<i>(please choose)</i>	Staying Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Safe Care	<input checked="" 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented to Partnership Forum, 13th March 2020 - #LivingOurValues & The Guardian Service Up-date • 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 • Presented to Audit Committee, 19th May 2022 – The Guardian Service End of Year Report, 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 • Presented to Workforce & OD Committee, 14th June 2022 - Deep Dive into Speaking Up Safely in SBUHB, 2021-22 • Presented to Workforce and OD Committee, 13th of October 2022 – Bi- Annual Update The Guardian Service, April 2022-August 2022
Appendices	1, 2, 3 – Available via the resource centre