



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Meeting Date	26 November 2020	Agenda Item	4.4
Report Title	The Guardian Service Ltd. End of Year Report		
Report Author	Julie Lloyd, Staff Experience & OD Manager		
Report Sponsor	Kathryn Jones, Interim Director of Workforce & OD		
Presented by	Kathryn Jones, Interim Director of Workforce & OD		
Freedom of Information	Open		
Purpose of the Report	<p>The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an end of year report from The Guardian Service Ltd, to continue to provide assurance that feedback from staff relating to bullying has and continues to be listened to through a suite of initiatives aimed to support cultural change, outline the commitment and actions planned to improve partnership working and confirm the decision to contract with the independent provider for a further 12 months.</p>		
Key Issues	<p>Since The Guardian Service launched as part of a suite of initiatives to support cultural change in SBUHB on 13th May 2019 there had been 96 contacts raising concerns (up until the 30th April 2020 with a further 37 contacts since the end of year report was produced). Importantly, 61 contacts had been also been resolved/closed (as at the end of September 2020). The number of contacts speaking up had increased tenfold from the number previously received by the Staff Experience & OD Manager, under the former internal process available.</p> <p>A copy of the End of Year report (May 19 to April 20) from the Guardian Service is provided in appendix 1 and appendix 2 is a copy of September's cumulative activity report. Appendix 3 provides an outline of the user feedback that has been provided by some of the contacts within SBUHB using the service.</p> <p>The original contract of 12-months was due to come to an end at the height of first wave of the pandemic in May and so a decision had to be taken to extend for 6-months until November 2020 to ensure staff and volunteers continued to be supported. Following presenting the end of year report (retrospectively due to the pandemic) to HB Partnership Forum on 22nd September 2020, a formal request was</p>		

	<p>made for the Health Board to stop contracting with the Guardian Service Ltd. However, due to the significant risks identified with stopping this service; for staff, patients and the organisation, as we enter into a second wave of the pandemic, in addition to winter pressures, Senior Leadership Team have taken the decision to contract for a further 12 months.</p> <p>We have listened to and acknowledge the concerns raised by our union colleagues, particularly in relation to the promotion of the Union's, and in response we plan to invite Trade Union colleagues to work in collaboration for the benefit of all by jointly developing a partnership working improvement plan. To strengthen this, there will be a nominated Exec and Independent Member identified for Trade Union colleagues to go directly to when it is required.</p>			
<p>Specific Action Required <i>(please choose one only)</i></p>	<p>Information</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Assurance</p>	<p>Approval</p>
	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOTE the report and take assurance that feedback from staff relating to bullying have been and continue to be listened to, through the continued action the Health Board has taken. • NOTE the development and implementation of a partnership working improvement plan • NOTE the up-date and recommendations detailed in the End of Year Report from The Guardian Service • NOTE the decision to contract for a further 12 months with the Guardian Service to ensure staff and volunteers continue to be supported during the adverse circumstances presented by the COVID-19 crisis. 			

THE GUARDIAN SERVICE LTD. END OF YEAR REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an end of year report from The Guardian Service Ltd, to continue to provide assurance that feedback from staff relating to bullying has and continues to be listened to through a suite of initiatives aimed to support cultural change, outline the commitment and actions planned to improve partnership working and confirm the decision to contract with the independent provider for a further 12 months.

2. BACKGROUND

The NHS Wales Staff Survey 2018 results highlighted the need to focus on addressing bullying within the Health Board, with **20%** of respondents confirming that they have experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work from their manager/team leader or other colleagues (an increase of 4% since 2016). Whilst this increase was reported across NHS Wales, the Health Board reported higher than the national overall score of 18%. Reviewing the qualitative comments that accompanied the staff survey results, of 959 comments and feedback provided in the free-text section, 59 (**6%** of the overall qualitative data) referred specifically to the term 'bullying' at work from manager/team leader or colleagues.

Subsequent blogs issued by the Chief Executive and Director of Workforce & OD resulted in numerous comments from staff around the need to take action which will enable staff to speak up in a confidential way and the importance of resolution. The Director of Workforce & OD has kept staff up to date through regular intranet blogs on how our thinking was developing in responding to concerns around bullying. This resulted in useful data which shaped and informed the organisation's thinking about what was important to staff. In listening to staff feedback, important features of a raising concerns service included impartiality, independence, accessibility and responsiveness. With only 22% of Staff Survey respondents in the Health Board believing that the organisation would take action, the Executive Team have been fully committed to taking decisive and timely action to support staff and act on their feedback.

We sought experience and best practice in NHS England where **Freedom to Speak up** is mandated. This enabled us to design the service specification and test the market for a provider via the tender process. In response to the tender submission process, a multi-disciplinary panel, including Board trade union representation, awarded the contract to **The Guardian Service Ltd**. The contract was awarded for one year as a pilot and the service was launched on **13th May 2019** for Bae Abertawe / Swansea Bay Health Board and has since been subject to continual monitoring and review.

As a reminder, the commissioning of The Guardian Service was part of an overarching suite of initiatives and the #ShapingSBUHB movement, aimed to support cultural change. This has included the commissioning of ACAS to run workshops for managers, HR and Trade Unions in addressing inappropriate behaviours at work, including bullying, extending our offering of behaviour based Leadership Development

Programmes, appointment of an HR investigations team, investment in operational HR teams and processes and the launch of the #LivingOurValues campaign.

The original contract of 12-months was due to come to an end at the height of first wave of the pandemic in May 2020 and so a decision had to be taken to extend for 6-months until November 2020 to ensure staff and volunteers continued to be supported during the adverse circumstances presented by the COVID-19 crisis.

2.1 Position to Date

Since The Guardian Service launched there have been **over 100 awareness sessions/stands** delivered to promote the service and these sessions are now offered virtually on-line to individuals and teams in light of the current circumstances. Up to 30th April 2020, **96 contacts** had raised concerns via the service (with an additional **37 contacts** since the report was produced). Importantly, **61 contacts** had been also been resolved/closed (as at the end of September 2020). **It is important to note that there has been a delay in closing cases due to the current Covid-19 situation, as staff have been redeployed to other areas/duties, but it is aimed that there will be a clear focus in this area when the situation allows and is appropriate.**

The number of contacts speaking up increased tenfold than those previously received by The Staff Experience & OD Manager, under the former internal process available.

As a reminder of that process; the 'Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns' is an all Wales procedure adopted by the Health Board Partnership Forum in January 2018. Within the Health Board, staff previously raised concerns via the following email address, but there was no infrastructure in place to monitor, respond or support staff (abm.raisingconcerns@wales.nhs.uk). This created risk to staff, patients and the organisation and was not a sustainable solution. Between November 2018 and May 2019, **5** contacts were received via the internal process. Of those contacts, 2 agreed to meet to discuss their concerns, which were subsequently resolved/closed, 1 was transferred to the Patient Feedback Team and 2 did not respond when the offer of meeting/calling to discuss was provided.

In presenting the 6-month up-date report to the Board at the end of November 2019, the Board was supportive of the continuation of an independent service for staff to raise concerns safely and confidentially. A copy of the End of Year Report from the Guardian Service is provided in appendix 1 and appendix 2 provides an outline of the user feedback that has been provided by some of the contacts within SBUHB using the service. It is planned that further work will be done on the data triangulation that was started prior to pandemic as part of continued evaluation of the service, however reflecting on our experience of the Guardian Service Ltd, the following points should be noted in what it has provided/delivered:

- Provision of an independent, safe, confidential service for staff to raise any work-related concerns
- Available **24/7, 365 days** a year - majority of contacts 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)
- Number of concerns raised aligned to the 100 projected for the size of the organisation (**96** by the end of the 12 months) and we are projected to have the same number of concerns this year (see Table 1 below)
- **133 staff** listened to/spoken up and or sign posted in confidence (to date – September 2020)
- Provides an infrastructure to support and deliver the All Wales **‘Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns’**

Table 1.

Month	Contacts per month 2019	Contacts per month 2020
May	2	5
June	7	8
July	6	4
August	10	10
September	6	5
Total for period	31	32

The following provides a summary of the feedback from the sub-group of the All Wales Partnership Forum focusing on Freedom to Speak Up on 14th January 2020 that was attended by the Staff Experience & OD Manager for SBUHB. This national group and the project is yet to be re-established since COVID-19.

- Overall the meeting was positive and everyone agreed that whatever is decided/taken forward needs to be the right thing for staff and patients, with staff feeling they can speak up and that they feel valued.
- There are to be clear links with the Quality and Safety Plan for NHS Wales due to be published
- Professor Aled Jones, School of Healthcare Sciences, Cardiff University shared the findings of his research to date on FTSU in NHS England and the Guardian Role, which is based on the majority having internal FTSU Guardians / advocates, which shouldn't be confused with the independent Guardians that we have appointed in Swansea Bay. His research supports the benefits of having an independent service as he made reference to capacity issues of those that are internal, the ability to be totally independent, Guardians feeling overwhelmed and feeling tarnished by becoming involved in toxic relationship

cases. He found there were no consistent guardians and no guidance on how the internal guardian role is implemented, such as minimum number of hours, who carries out the role etc.

2.2 Health Board Partnership Forum

Following presenting the end of year report (retrospectively due to the pandemic), detailing the contract extension and proposals to contract for a further 12 months to HB Partnership Forum on 22nd September 2020, a formal request was made for the Health Board to stop contracting with the Guardian Service Ltd.

Health Board Partnership Forum have since formally raised the following key concerns:

- It undermines and debilitates each Union's ability to recruit and retain members
- It is not value for money; the money would be better spent on facilities or increasing the number of psychologists
- It contradicts the partnership agreement

Due to the significant risks identified with stopping this service; for staff, patients and the organisation, as we enter into a second wave of the pandemic, in addition to winter pressures, Senior Leadership Team have taken the decision to contract for a further 12 months. We have listened to and acknowledge the concerns raised by our union colleagues and in response, we plan to invite Trade Union colleagues to work in collaboration for the benefit of all by jointly developing a partnership working improvement plan. To strengthen this, there will be a nominated Exec and Independent Member identified for Trade Union colleagues to go directly to when it is required.

Part of this will involve key representatives attending monthly Guardian Service reporting and monitoring meetings, exchanging of data between Unions and The Guardian Service to further support monitoring and evaluation of the service and equal promotion of services, which will start with the revised virtual Induction programme and staff handbook being developed for new starters. Working in collaboration will be essential as part of us successfully delivering cultural change under the national Healthier Working Relationships agenda, a 'Just' Culture and operating under the new All Wales Respect & Resolution policy. As we progress both the partnership working improvement plan and work on the 'Just' model and Healthier Working Relationships agenda together, this will support us to work outside of formal process. It is aimed that this new way of operating together will in turn, lead to us not needing to renew the contract with The Guardian Service going forward.

In support of this improvement work, it is also planned that the results of the impending NHS Wales Staff Survey (to be launched 4th November 2020) will be used as a mechanism to engage with staff wider on their views and whether they value the Guardian Service and we will test staff opinion on The Guardian Service at 9 months into the new contract.

3 GOVERNANCE AND RISK ISSUES

The following points outline the risks of not contracting with The Guardian Service Ltd for a further 12 months:

- The organisation will be seen by its staff to be removing its main option of out-of-hours support, during the most adverse time that they have ever experienced. It will not demonstrate that we are listening to or valuing our staff.
- Where staff experience and concerns are not raised and/or addressed, not only does this impact on staff, research confirms it impacts on patients and their care/experience.
- Patient and staff-related concerns are at risk of not being raised, heard or addressed.
- There will be 79 on-going contacts left requiring another confidential option to listen / take forward their concern.
- There will be no effective infrastructure in place to deliver the All Wales 'Procedure for NHS Staff to Raise Concerns' or respond to the demand of at least 100 staff speaking up (over 12 months).
- It will impede the cultural change we are trying to effect, where staff feeling able to speak up safely and confidentially and alignment to the national Healthier Working Relationships, a 'Just' Culture and movement to the All Wales Respect and Resolution Policy.
- It goes against our own Health Board Values, as does not demonstrate Caring for Each Other when we are removing one of staff's support mechanisms ahead of the busiest Winter our staff will have ever experienced. It will also go against Always Improving and Working Together, in line with the partnership working improvement plan mentioned earlier and our transition to a 'Just' Culture as part of the Healthier Working Relationships movement.

4 RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- **NOTE** the report and take assurance that feedback from staff relating to bullying have been and continue to be listened to, through the continued action the Health Board has taken.
- **NOTE** the development and implementation of a partnership working improvement plan
- **NOTE** the up-date and recommendations detailed in the End of Year Report from The Guardian Service
- **NOTE** the decision to contract for a further 12 months with the Guardian Service to ensure staff and volunteers continue to be supported during the adverse circumstances presented by the COVID-19 crisis.

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 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 continued 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
Appendices	1, 2 and 3

Guardian Service Report May 2019 to April 2020

Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide an end of year report at the end of the 1-year pilot of an independent raising concerns service for Swansea Bay University Health Board. It is also to provide recommendations from the themes arising from the contacts received by the Raising Concerns Guardians in the first year of operation.

Promotion/Communication Visits

The comprehensive high-level communication plan has continued to be implemented throughout the year with the full support of the Staff Experience & Organisational Development Team. This included presenting at the regular monthly staff inductions including those for Junior Doctors, through Guardian presentations to staff groups at team meetings, awareness sessions and stands at various sites across the health board and use of corporate-wide communication channels.

However, there were some areas that were “hard to reach” such as Estates and Mental Health and just prior to Covid-19 a supplementary plan was being developed to try and ensure that those areas of the Health Board were visited. With the majority of contacts using direct phone or email; the value of the both drop-in awareness stands and formally arranged information session has been highlighted.

A total of 115 (76 at six months) promotional visits have been held as at 30th April 2020, although the last face-to-face visit was on 13th March 2020 due to the Covid-19 situation.

In adapting to new ways of working in light of COVID-19, there are plans in place for promotion and communication of the Service to take place via virtual and remote means and the service has continued to operate in this way for contacts needing support throughout the pandemic so far and has been promoted along with the range of wellbeing support that has been offered to Swansea Bay staff during this time of adversity.

Number of concerns raised

There have been **96** (41 at six months) concerns raised by staff from 13th May 2019 to 30th April 2020.

Contact has been made from staff to the Raising Concerns Guardians via **email - 906** (201 at six months), **telephone - 493** (171 at six months) and **face to face visits – 152** (51 at six months).

The Raising Concerns Guardians encourage face-to-face meetings, but follow ups may be by telephone or email as appropriate.

Since the Covid-19 situation, engagement has continued via telephone, email, and other online methods such as Zoom, Skype and Facetime depending on the contact's preferred method.

Themes

The concerns raised are broken down into the following themes:

Themes	No. of concerns raised		Percentage	
	12 months	6 months	12 months	6 months
Patient safety	6	3	7%	4%
Management Concern	31	9	22%	33%
System and Process	12	8	20%	13%
Bullying and Harassment	17	12	29%	18%
Discrimination and Inequality	2	2	5%	2%
Behavioural / Relationship	18	5	12%	19%
Other	10	2	5%	11%
TOTAL	96	41	100%	100%

The System and Process concerns relate to grievance / disciplinary process (4), job roles (2), contractual salary issues (2), ward access and service delivery (3). The "other" theme relates to concerns raised from staff that do not fall within the above categories, i.e. Covid-19, awaiting referral and requests for information. It should be noted that often the concerns raised could be reflected in more than one theme but a decision has to be made as to the most appropriate. **To re-confirm, The Guardian Service does not intervene in formal Employee Relations Cases, however it is important to share feedback received in listening to staff as part of initial scoping of a concern.**

The outcome of the bullying and harassment concerns raised that are **closed**:

Outcome of bullying and harassment concerns raised	Number		Percentage	
	12 months	6 months	12 months	6 months
Informally resolved with Guardian support	3	1	25%	43%
Decided not to take forward	3	2	50%	43%
Resignation	1	1	25%	14 %
TOTAL	7	4	100%	100%

The increase in contacts that were resolved should be noted. Rather than engage in a formal process, it was possible through empowering for the member of staff to raise the issue themselves, while the service provided ongoing support.

Staff Groups

Detailed below are the staff groups who have raised concerns. The staff group is defined by the NHS.

Staff Groups	Number		Percentage	
	12 months	6 months	12 months	6 months
Additional Clinical Services	11	2	5%	12%
Administrative and Clerical	35	16	39%	37%
Allied Health Professional	8	3	7%	7%
Medical and Dental	5	3	7%	5%
Nursing and Midwifery Registered	23	6	15%	24%
Estates and Ancillary	1	1	2.5%	1%
Healthcare Scientists	2	1	2.5%	2%
Role not confirmed	11	9	22%	12%
TOTAL	96	41	100%	100%

The data largely remains the same as at 6 months apart from Additional Clinical Services and Nursing and Midwifery Registered which shows a considerable percentage increase.

Patient safety

There have been 6 patient safety issues. Two cases are still open. Two were regarding staff shortages, where for one it was agreed that better communication to staff via a variety of means would help reduce the perception or concern that nothing is happening, while the other resulted in the contact resigning. The latter issue has resulted in an action plan being developed and various meetings are being held to ensure implementation.

The reason why staff use the Guardian Service

Reason	Number		Percentage	
	12 months	6 months	12 months	6 months
Fear of damage to career	20	13	32%	21%
Fear of losing job	3	3	7%	3%
Fear of reprisal	12	12	29%	13%
Believe they will not be listened to	24	4	10%	25.5%
Believe the organization will not take action	24	7	17%	25.5%

Have raised the concern before but have not been listed to / nothing has been done	11	2	5%	12%
TOTALS	94	41	100%	100%

The data indicates that only 94 of the 96 contacts gave a reason for using the Guardian Service, as one member of staff was requesting information and another has yet to confirm why they contacted the service.

There has been a marked increase in two of the categories where staff believe they will not be listened to and believe the organization will not take action.

Cases by Directorates

The table below shows the number of concerns raised per directorate.

Directorate	Number		Percentage	
	12 months	6 months	12 months	6 months
Morrison Delivery Unit	35	10	24%	36%
Singleton Delivery Unit	13	10	24%	13%
Neath Port Talbot Delivery Unit	19	8	20%	19%
Primary & Community Services Delivery Unit	9	2	5%	8.5%
Mental Health & Learning Disabilities	7			6.5%
Informatics	1			1%
HQ	5	5	12%	5%
Cimla	1			1%
Not confirmed	6	6	15%	6%
TOTALS	96	41	100%	100%

There has been a marked increase of concerns raised at Morrison Delivery Unit from the initial six months. This data shows the impact of the communications plan with concerns raised from Mental Health and Learning Disabilities directorate after briefing staff at team meetings, arranged as a result of identified gaps in communication across the Unit.

Action taken to improve speak up culture

Action taken to address themes

- In some instances, staff contact the Raising Concerns Guardian because formal processes are taking too long, although it has been noted that there has been a reduction in this sort of contact since other measures to improve formal

processes were put in place by the Health Board. The Raising Concerns Guardian is able to explain to a contact; the complexities and time constraints that may arise during a formal investigation to support them make a decision around the course of action they would like to take, however is unable to engage until after the case has been closed if this is the route they have decided to take or have already taken.

- The Raising Concerns Guardians supports staff by offering information on the options available to them in taking forward their concern, offering safe, independent listening without judgement, highlighting the benefit of facilitated meetings as well checking/confirming if they are members of any applicable Trade Union and has sign posted staff to their unions if they are members and this is appropriate to the contact and the reason for the concern they are raising.
- A benefit reported by the Raising Concerns Guardians where cases have been closed, is that they have enabled and empowered the contact to raise and take forward their concerns themselves by ensuring they have as much information as possible as to their options without engaging in a formal process.

Communication and escalation

- The Raising Concerns Guardians attend meetings and events including the monthly staff inductions to brief staff about the service. This encourages staff to be aware of and use the service. This has included briefings on a number of occasions to junior doctors which is welcomed. The access/contact details to the Guardian Service are available on posters displayed across all sites, all the Health Board's online systems with a number of referrals coming from the Health Board's Wellbeing Service.
- The Raising Concerns Guardians become empathetic listeners when a staff member wishes to offload. However, as per our mandate we do not become involved in any internal disciplinary or grievance process. Staff are informed of our position at the outset as well as advised that in order to make a decision, they should consider all options including speaking with their Trade Union if applicable. However, Raising Concerns Guardians are available to listen in these situations and thereby promote the Speaking Up culture.
- Monthly meetings are held with the Director of Workforce & Organisational Development to talk through the monthly activity reports which includes themes and outcome of cases. No individual can be identified by the report, therefore keeping staff members' confidentiality, which is essential and a contractual obligation. Eight-weekly meetings have been held with the Chair of the Health Board and her commitment to the Service is clear.
- There are large number of "open" cases which have been discussed at the above meetings as to what actions can be undertaken to help resolve them. **It**

is important to note that there will be a slight delay in closing these cases due to the current Covid-19 situation, as staff have been redeployed to other duties but there will be a clear focus in this area when the situation allows and is appropriate.

- Where an issue is agreed for escalation the system is used as follows:

Red	These scenarios require immediate escalation and response within 12 hours
Amber	A response is required within 48 hours
Green	A response is required with 72 hours

Learning and Improvement

- The Raising Concerns Guardians attend monthly Guardian Service meetings where difficult concerns raised are discussed, peer support and learning gained and good practice shared. Again, confidentiality is held at all times as cases are only referred to by their number so no individual is identified.
- As the Guardian Service has clients across a number of English NHS Trusts, we are in a position to compare and contrast best practice approaches (while acknowledging the difference approaches in the Home Countries) in respect to policy, service implementation and organisational response. This has enabled a report on COVID-19 issues from all Trusts using the Guardian Service to be circulated as well as other promotional ideas/videos to be shared where applicable.

Recommendations

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 situation has meant that some of the previous recommendations mentioned in the six monthly report along with plans to develop the Service have been affected and so they are repeated here where applicable.

- 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. As discussed in recent meetings, the number of “open” cases is a concern with efforts needing to be made to resolve them.
- 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. With regard to recruiting new staff, the

perception is that the Executive Team are doing little, which we know is not the case.

- There has been some feedback on the lack of a consistent policy with regard to exit interviews. On a number of occasions when staff have made the decision to leave the Health Board they have wanted to undertake an exit interview to give the organisation the opportunity to review any appropriate actions that might be applicable but this has unfortunately not happened.
- Staff are reporting that the length of time taken for grievances to be heard is too long and exceeds the policy. Steps have been made to improve this and there is some evidence of positive impact, but it is essentially important that regular communication with staff to keep them updated with reasons for delay is undertaken. This will also help encourage staff to raise any further concerns.
- A continued programme of communication and engagement sessions is required to promote the Guardian Service to all staff groups wherever they are located, as there are still areas that are not aware of the service despite the comprehensive plan undertaken so far. This will be even more important as the Health Board works to recover from Covid-19.
- There has been much work on “Living our Values” but there are clearly areas where the philosophy is as yet not embedded, which causes issues when there is conflict between staff. This is shown in the considerable increase in “behavioural responsibility” concerns from the first six months. Real progress has been made, especially with new staff, but there is still much to do particularly with regard to more established staff. Contacts often tell us that they have been promoted to positions with little or no experience of or training to equip them for managing staff. Staff would rather take sick leave than speak up, as they believe they will not be listened to or that the Health Board will take action.
- There has been a good level of engagement from HR at certain sites and it would be hoped that this can be further extended to all sites. This would further support all staff to be able to access the Service, as well as enable better interaction with HR staff.
- There has been a lack of engagement, and in some instances opposition from some of the Trade Unions which has reduced the opportunity for partnership working and the sharing of data. This would support measure the impact of the service and prevent duplication/cross working. It is recommended that there is greater partnership working for the benefit of both staff and patients going forward.

THE GUARDIAN SERVICE FEEDBACK SURVEY

Time and Date	Name of Health Board	Name of Guardian	Q.1. How did you hear of this Guardian Service at your organisation?	Q.2. How did you first make contact with The Guardian Service?	Q.3. Was your initial contact dealt with promptly?	Q.4. Do you believe that your confidentiality was respected and maintained at all times in line with your expectations?	Q.5. Did your Guardian make you feel comfortable and safe at all times?	Q.6. Did you feel listened to?	Q.7. Did the Guardian explain the process at the outset and follow that process?	Q.8. Did the guardian fully understand your concerns?	Q.9. Did your Guardian keep you informed of progress in a timely manner?	Q.10. Did the Trust deliver a satisfactory outcome to your concerns?	Q.11. Given your experience would you use the Guardian Service again?	Q.12. Would you recommend the Guardian Service to a colleague?	Q.13. Any additional comments:
02-06-20 15:58	Swansea Bay University Health Board	Malcolm	Email/staff intranet	By email	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No. Not applicable	Yes	Yes	I had an excellent response from the Guardian service - Malcolm was very measured in his approach and allowed me time to talk through my concerns - he pointed me in the right direction when I believe I had hit a brick wall at speed and I then realised I was burnt out. Very impressed and grateful for the support. many thanks.
22-07-20 7:56	Swansea Bay University Health Board	Malcolm Stammers	Recommended by a colleague	By telephone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Excellent service provided where I felt listened to and valued.
08-09-20 12:30	Swansea Bay University Health Board	Malcolm Stammers	Email/staff intranet	By telephone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not applicable	No. I was concerned about changes to my job role. The two managers dealing with this while my line manager was absent were aggressive and passive aggressive. Their stance was dictatorial and unempathetic. I felt marginalised and belittled.	Yes	Yes	This service was my lifeline during a hateful time in my career.
01-10-20 9:39	Swansea Bay University Health Board	Malcolm Stammers	Email/staff intranet	By email	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Malcolm was very supportive during the whole time we corresponded with him. He explained the whole process and brought up our concerns in a very diplomatic and secure way as our concerns were with a senior member of staff. Malcolm worked hard behind the scenes and was always on hand if we needed to speak to him. I would thoroughly recommend the Guardian service, thank you.
06-10-20 9:16	Swansea Bay University Health Board	Malcolm Stammers	Email/staff intranet	By email	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Thank you for your help
12-10-20 15:56	Swansea Bay University Health Board	Malcolm Stammers	Email/staff intranet	By telephone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not applicable	No. Following several discussions with both Crane and Malcolm as a team we decided not to proceed with the issue. Our line managers were supportive from the time of the first contact with the service until the end.	Yes	Yes	An excellent independent service which provided advice and guidance that allowed us to make our own decision on how to proceed. There was no pressure on time or criticism on the final decision not to proceed.