



Doncaster and Bassetlaw
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



Speaking Up

Enabling plan 2024 to 2028

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals



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Introduction

The DBTH Speaking Up Strategy for 2024-2028 is a revised strategy designed to help improve what we do in relation to Speaking Up, how we tell you about its impact and how this work will contribute and support positive cultural influence at DBTH.

This strategy has been developed through direct consultation with Speak Up Partners and informed by discussions with divisional/directorate leadership teams and engagement with a wide range of colleagues through cross site engagement sessions, training events and feedback processes. Engagement has also taken place with Staff Side representatives, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) leads and staff networks, to ensure fairness and inclusion throughout the process.

Freedom to Speak Up (Speaking Up as it is known at DBTH) was introduced to the NHS in 2016, following the 2015 review by Sir Robert Francis in response to the Mid Staffordshire enquiry. The review highlighted the importance of cultures that embrace transparency and support raising concerns to improve patient safety and colleague experience. The early guidance that supported the implementation of Speaking Up has seen much revision over the past eight years.

In the light of continued learning from case reviews and changes to national policy, we have seen Freedom to Speak Up evolve as the relationship between Speaking Up, quality improvement and just and learning cultures has become better understood. Recent recommendations and guidance acknowledge how Speaking Up should be interwoven into organisational cultures and behaviours and therefore asks all Trusts to have a Freedom to Speak Up Strategy that clearly links to the Trust overall strategy and its related vision and objectives.

This revised strategy considers the extensive work that is being driven nationally and locally in relation to Just Culture, Speaking Up and patient and colleague safety and experience and looks to respond to this to complement existing workstreams at the Trust for example, in relation to Just Culture, EDI, and patient safety and quality.

A self-assessment of Speaking Up cultures, services, data, and learning was undertaken at DBTH in June 2023 which highlighted key areas of improvement and focus areas for consideration. The resulting actions are incorporated within this strategy, including developing skills and further exploring how we support people who may have cultural barriers to Speaking Up or who may be less confident or less likely to do so.

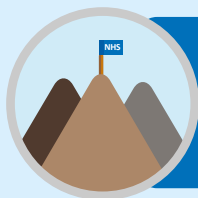
This work also emphasised the strength in the partnership approach to Speaking Up at DBTH and demonstrated how this provides different routes and support mechanisms for colleagues to Speak Up. It also highlighted the need to ensure there is a consistency in application of the Speak Up process and the triangulation of data and learning, to support identification of themes.

This strategy will be underpinned by a delivery plan setting out how each of the themes will be achieved, providing clear outcomes, qualitative and quantitative data measures and timeframes by which the strategy will be measured.

Progress against this strategy will be reported bi-annually to the People Committee and Board, in line with national guidance and best practice. Updates will also be provided as appropriate to Trust Executive Group.



**Paula Hill, Speaking Up
Guardian at DBTH**



Our vision

The ambition of the Trust

To be the safest trust in England, outstanding in all that we do.

We Care values

We always put the patient first

Everyone counts – we treat each other with courtesy, honest, respect and dignity

Committed to quality and continuously improving patient experience

Always caring and compassionate

Responsible and accountable for our actions – taking pride in our work

Encouraging and valuing our diverse colleagues and rewarding ability and innovation

The DBTH Way

We lead by example and role model the **DBTH Way** and our **We Care values**



Kind



Person centred



Accountable



Inclusive



Empowering



Collaborative

We show



Attentive listening



Integrity and honesty



Courage and positivity

#SpeakUp
to make a difference

Our aim at DBTH is to embed a cultural environment where Speaking Up, Listening Up and Following Up are integral to providing outstanding care and colleague experience, and where Speaking Up results in learning and improvement. Through the implementation of this strategy, we want to ensure that colleagues feel safe to Speak Up, are supported to do so, and that confidentiality is safeguarded. We acknowledge that fostering this environment of psychological safety is a crucial investment in all of our people (patients and colleagues, including learners).

Colleagues who are enabled to work in a culture that supports Speaking Up will demonstrate the Trust's values through their aligned behaviours and feel empowered to challenge behaviours that are not in keeping with these values, the DBTH Way and a Just and Learning Culture.

Therefore, we ask everyone to **"Speak Up to Make a Difference."**

We aim to achieve this vision by delivering across the following themes.

Raising the profile of Speaking Up

If we are to achieve our vision, it is essential that all colleagues understand that [Speaking Up](#) is about sharing their concerns about anything that gets in the way of providing good quality care and colleague experience, and that this should happen at the earliest opportunity to prevent harm and allow learning. We want all colleagues to know there are multiple routes to receive support, advice and guidance.

To enable the above, we will prioritise the following actions (some are already underway):

- Develop a robust annual communication plan to maintain the profile of Speaking Up, ensuring visibility and reach across all colleagues, learners and volunteers.
- Utilising the National Guardian's Office (NGO) awareness raising toolkit and the content of level 1 NHS England training, we will ensure all new colleagues receive an induction including Speaking Up and wider cultural themes.
- Roll out the revised [DBTH Speaking Up Policy](#) supported by a local best practice 'policy on a page' to make this easily accessible.
- Visible pledges from leaders and managers at divisional and departmental level, therefore demonstrating that managers and leaders at all levels welcome and encourage Speaking Up.
- Use clear, effective and varied communications to publicise our range of partners to Speaking Up through the [DBTH 'wheel of support'](#), ensuring this information is accessible and easy for people to understand.
- Further develop and support a team of [Speak Up Champions](#) who will raise awareness in their local areas, ensuring up to date information and resources are available for colleagues who explore Speaking Up.

- Provide regular visibility sessions rotating across all areas and DBTH sites, ensuring the provision of information and supportive discussions for all colleagues and managers.
- Increase the understanding and awareness of Speaking Up, through monthly publications in Buzz, Managers' brief and Weekly round ups and continued use of the Hive with increased viability on social media and the DBTH app.

Success measures

- Consistently high attendance at corporate induction training and wider raising awareness sessions
- New resources will be visible in all divisions and directorates, across all sites
- Colleagues will report they know what Speaking Up is, and when, where and how to do it (staff survey results)
- Colleagues will understand the collaborative working structure with the Speak Up Partners team
- Increase in intranet and social media activity, measured through activation of the QR code and views.



Providing easily accessible, consistent, high quality Speak Up services

A partnership approach to Speaking Up is already recognised and encouraged at DBTH with the aim of fostering a positive, open and inclusive culture where people are aware of the different routes and support mechanisms available, feel safe to raise concerns and where those who do Speak Up are treated fairly and learning is applied. We are undertaking work to support consistency in approach across partners and the triangulation of data from different sources, as this may identify themes which are not directly apparent from a single contact.

To enable the above, we will prioritise the following actions (some are already underway):

- Work collaboratively with all partners across the Trust to support them to provide a consistent, fair and restorative Speaking Up process in line with our learning from feedback and experience.
- Provide a framework for how concerns should be responded to, when raised to different partners, to ensure a consistency in approach, actions and behaviours. This will be supported by the development of a managers/partners handbook.
- Ensure that all managers and wider Speak Up partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to Speaking Up and have the competence and confidence to receive and respond to concerns consistently and compassionately.
- Provide timely, ongoing support to all managers and wider Speak Up partners to enable the above.
- Devise a process for partners to provide anonymised numbers, themes and learning to enable the triangulation of data as part of the wider governance and assurance process.
- Ensure that key learning related to concerns are articulated to everyone impacted by the concern in an open and transparent manner, while respecting confidentiality.
- Strengthen the process for learning from concerns and ensure all partners know their responsibilities in following this through to improvement.
- Ensure that all learning and improvement informed by Speaking Up is celebrated.
- Ensure feedback is obtained concerning colleagues' Speak Up experience, to enable continuous improvement.

Success measures

- Launch of new Speak Up policy and training
- Increase in recorded numbers of cases that are being positively managed by SU partners
- Number of case studies shared reporting a positive experience across varied partners
- Improvement in staff survey questions relating to confidence in Speaking Up
- High compliance with Speak Up process demonstrated through regular audit and feedback
- Timely completion of cases from date raised to date closed and feedback received
- Increase in positive feedback received from those who have raised concerns
- High attendance at partners training and engagement sessions across all divisions/directorates.

Embedding an open and transparent Speak Up culture

The DBTH People Strategy (2023-2027) and associated delivery plan introduced the Just Culture workstream, the DBTH Way, increased focus on diversity and inclusion and improved wellbeing offers. This work also provides collaboration with wider supporting cultural workstreams at DBTH including the national Patient Safety Incident Risk Framework (PSIRF).

As our Just Culture approach places equal emphasis on accountability and learning, we recognise that to improve our Speak Up culture we need to learn from experiences where Speaking Up has gone well and where it has not gone as expected. Where it has not gone well, we will consider the learning from these experiences to explore and learn. We therefore need all colleagues to engage in cultural learning activities, to enable them to feel psychologically safe and supported to Speak Up.

To achieve the above objective, we will prioritise the following actions (some of which are already underway):

- Speak Up partners will work alongside leaders across the Trust to raise awareness of and embed our Just Culture principles, utilising these to explore and implement improvements in Speak Up services.
- Provide Just Culture development sessions linked to our revised NHSE aligned Speak Up training at levels 1, 2 and 3.
- Encourage inclusion, engagement and professional challenge as part of role modelling our Just Culture principles, and We Care values.
- Facilitate focussed discussions on creating a healthy Speak Up culture and a culture of psychological safety, where healthy, early conversations are encouraged and welcomed as a learning opportunity.
- Encourage colleagues to talk about their Speak Up experiences (positive and negative), sharing these stories in line with the wider Just Culture work programme.

- Learn from listening to these stories and share how we use this insight to improve our Speak Up offer. These stories will also be used to inform our detailed Speak Up process, ensuring we consider restoration and team building in a way that is holistic and people centred.
- Recruit, train and support a diverse group of Speak Up Champions, who will play a crucial role in encouraging colleagues to Speak Up at the earliest opportunity to embed a culture of openness and honesty.

Success measures

- Development of the associated delivery plan to support this strategy
- Continued improvement in the annual staff survey questions relating to psychological safety
- Stories shared by colleagues reflecting that they feel physiologically safe to raise concerns and that they feel their concerns have been addressed fairly when they do
- Reduced number of Speak Up cases raised anonymously
- Reduced number of Speak Up cases raised externally
- Increased number of cases raised and facilitated openly.

#SpeakUp
to make a difference



Identifying and tackling barriers to Speaking Up

Fostering a culture of openness and psychological safety where everyone can feel confident and safe to speak up is crucial to delivering on our Speaking Up ambitions, as well as to achieving our [Trust vision to be “the safest Trust in England, outstanding in all that we do”](#). We hear examples where people stay quiet for fear that Speaking Up may lead to mistreatment or where they feel speaking up will be futile as it will not result in positive action. Overcoming these barriers is essential, for our culture at work and for those who use our services.

To achieve the above objectives, we will prioritise the following actions (some of which are already underway):

- Work collaboratively with our wider partners to embed inclusive messaging to embed our [Just Culture principles](#) and promote positive behaviours across the Trust. We will use varied communication methods and tools to connect with all colleagues and ensure our messages reach all groups.
- Introduce our revised training and development offer to explore how barriers to Speaking Up are developed, how they can be prevented and how they can be removed.
- Continue to enable a diverse range of colleagues to share their stories about combating barriers to Speaking Up to allow learning and improve Speak Up services.
- Grow our team of diverse Speak Up Champions from all areas of the Trust, across all professions and job roles.
- Continue to work with the EDI lead and staff networks to support those who, for whatever reason, may find it harder to Speak Up, ensuring that their voice is heard.
- Ensure that Speaking Up is available across all groups and shift patterns to ensure everyone has access and has a voice that counts.

- Work with the lead for Organisational Development, EDI and Wellbeing to improve our understanding of information in relation to the diverse colleagues who access Speak Up services.

Success measures

- Increased number of colleagues who Speak Up who are willing to share their protected characteristics.
- Increased number of Speak Up concerns initiated or signposted through staff network champions.
- Increased number of people Speaking Up at both Partner and Guardian level.
- Decrease in number of colleagues who report that their Speak Up attempts have not been heard or responded to in line with the Speak Up process.
- Decrease in number of colleagues who report detriment following Speaking Up.



Education, Learning and Improvement

DBTH acknowledges that learning is an essential part of Speaking Up and that by nurturing curiosity and being proactive to learn, we can help break down barriers to Speaking Up. We also understand that by welcoming the giving and receiving of information and feedback we can enhance our opportunity to improve. We believe that having a revised training and development offer, which incorporates levels 2 and 3 of the NHSE Speak Up training, will provide the opportunity to have good conversations that tie in Speaking Up to our wider people and cultural plans, having a greater impact on engagement, learning and practice.

To achieve the above objective, we will prioritise the following actions (some of which are already underway):

- Review the delivery of the HEE levels, 1, 2 and 3 training ensuring that joint DBTH cultural messages are delivered in line with national recommendations.
- Ensure that all new colleagues to DBTH receive Speaking Up information in line with the National Guardian's Office awareness raising toolkit as part of their corporate or vocational induction.
- Use a roadshow style approach, to allow broader engagement and exploration to embed learning.

- Work collaboratively with partners at Chesterfield Royal Hospital and Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Trust (RDASH) to demonstrate wider learning and evidence the benefits of different delivery models.
- Ensure all leaders, managers and wider partners receive training in line with Level 2 NHSE Speak Up training recommendations and local Just Culture principles.

Success measures

- Number of colleagues receiving the revised level 1 - Speak Up (induction) training.
- Number of partners receiving level 2 - Listen Up (partner) training.
- Number of senior leaders receiving level 3 - Follow Up training.
- Colleagues will have the appropriate skills to know when, where and how to Speak Up and this will be reflected in the annual staff survey responses.
- All Speak Up partners will report they have the appropriate tools to receive and respond to concerns in line with the revised Speak Up process.



Governance and Assurance Processes

In order to understand and demonstrate our performance against this strategy, we commit to a process of ongoing governance and assurance, ensuring that data trends are appropriately considered by the Speaking Up Forum, Just Culture Group and PSIRF Implementation Group, with triangulated anonymous data submitted to the People Committee and Board as part of the assurance process.

To achieve the above objectives, we will prioritise the following actions (some of which are already underway):

- Continue to systematically record all concerns raised through Freedom to Speak Up services, in line with guidance from the National Guardian's Office.
- Introduce a consistent method of reporting and recording concerns raised with wider Speak Up Partners, in line with the revised Speak Up process.
- Encourage divisional level consideration of Speak Up activity, including all learning and improvement.
- Review the annual staff survey results including identification of any 'hot spots' or blind spots.
- Review the Freedom to Speak Up evaluations following conclusion of any concerns raised.
- Regularly review themes or trends raised with wider Speak Up partners.
- Provide bi-annual high-level figures to the People Committee and Trust Board, reflecting themes and trends, making recommendations regarding changes to policy and practice in line with any associated learning.
- Establish the role of the Senior Independent Director (SID) as appropriate in supporting SU cases that are escalated in relation to perceived detriment.
- Monitor percentage completion of the revised Speak Up, Listen Up and Follow Up training packages.

- Review number of contacts with Champions and partners.
- Regularly monitor delivery against the national FTSU reflection and planning tool through a process of peer review.
- Continue to strengthen the Speak Up Governance Group (FTSU Forum), increasing representation across all divisions and directorates.
- Review national case reviews to ensure that any recommendations and learning are implemented, where appropriate.

Success measures

- Changes in employee relations metrics including grievances and suspensions
- Qualitative feedback on concerns raised through the FTSU Guardian and wider partners
- Improved triangulation and understanding of Speak Up data
- Improved position in national benchmarking data from the National Guardian's Office
- Improved staff survey results on colleagues' reporting concerns and feeling they are treated fairly.

My Speak Up pledge:

To support my coworkers to feel safe to speak up





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