



## CoDH Briefing: Report of the Freedom to Speak Up Review

### Summary

The Freedom to Speak Up Review is an independent review, led by Sir Robert Francis QC, into creating an open and honest reporting culture in the NHS. The review's report sets out 20 principles and actions which are intended to create the right conditions for NHS staff to speak up, share what works and provide redress when things go wrong in future.

The report has two recommendations:

#### *Recommendation 1*

All organisations which provide NHS healthcare and regulators should implement the Principles and Actions set out in this report in line with the good practice described in this report.

#### *Recommendation 2*

The Secretary of State for Health should review at least annually the progress made in the implementation of these Principles and Actions and the performance of the NHS in handling concerns and the treatment of those who raise them, and report to Parliament.

From the evidence received, the report draws five overarching themes. These are the need for:

- Culture change
- Improved handling of cases
- Measures to support good practice
- Particular measures for vulnerable groups
- Extending legal protection.

Chapters 5-9 of the report address each of these themes. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

### The Freedom to Speak Up Review (Eng)

**Purpose:** This briefing provides a summary of Sir Robert Francis' report on the Freedom to Speak Up Review

**Publication Date:** 11 February 2015

**Relevance for CoDH members:** Section 8.2 of the report pertains to students and trainees and contains two actions of relevance to members.

**CoDH contact for more information:**

[Jonathan Eames](#)



## **Relevance for CoDH members**

Paragraph 57 (p. 16) sets out the following expectation:

‘Raising concerns and the role of Human Factors should be included in the curriculum of all healthcare professional training programmes. It is important that there is a high level of consistency in the training provided. I therefore invite Health Education England and NHS England, in consultation with stakeholders, to devise a common structure based on the good practice described in this report, to underpin training provided in trusts.’

In addition, Section 8.2 of the report focuses on healthcare students and trainees (pp. 177-180). This includes:

### **University training and placements**

- The inclusion of training in raising concerns within curricula and variations in the level and availability of such training.
- The vulnerability of students raising concerns, particularly in terms of the need to secure ‘sign off’ from placement supervisors/mentors.

### **Fitness to practice (FtP)**

The role of universities in running FtP hearings (the report only mentions student nurses):

- Whether universities are adequately skilled and equipped to perform such a function
- Whether universities could be biased against students due to a conflict of interest to maintain the availability of placements

### **Protection for students**

The report concludes that it is essential that the Government extends statutory protection to include all students when on work placements studying for a career in healthcare not just student nurses (a protection being brought in this year following BIS consultation in 2014).

### **Good practice (referenced in paragraph 57)**

Education and training organisations:

- Cover raising concerns in the course curriculum
- Make at least one officer available for receiving concerns from students and trainees and offering advice and support
- Ensure support (both practical and psychological) is provided throughout any informal or formal raising concerns process
- Ensure that students are given protected time to reflect on their placements, including when they raise concerns, and have a support network in place to help them through difficult situations.

Clinical placements



- Organisations offering clinical placements make available to clinical students and trainees the same procedures for raising concerns, obtaining advice and support and means of investigating concerns as for their regular staff.
- Providers of a clinical placement inform the responsible educational or training organisation if a clinical student or trainee makes a public interest disclosure or raises a comparable concern, unless the student has specifically asked that this is not done.

#### Assessments

- Educational or training organisations review any adverse assessment of the competence or fitness of a clinical student or trainee who has made a public interest disclosure or has raised a comparable concern to ensure that it has not caused or contributed to a disadvantage or detriment in an assessment.

#### Education and training organisations and regulators

- Work closely when assessing the suitability of placements for students ensuring that they are good quality placements that will add value to the clinical student or trainee working in the NHS
- Consider how credit for raising concerns that have contributed to patient safety can be given in students' and trainees' assessments.

#### Regulators

- Regulators do not validate any course/placement which repeatedly receives poor feedback or where concerns have continually been ignored.

The report concludes that:

*There is evidence that support and protection for students and trainees generally is patchy and that they can fall between health education institutions, the regulators and providers of healthcare. This is addressed in Principle 18 and its corresponding actions.*

Principle 18 states that:

All principles in this report should be applied with necessary adaptations to education and training settings for students and trainees working towards a career in healthcare.

There are two actions stemming from this principle:

Action 18.1: Professional regulators and Royal Colleges in conjunction with Health Education England should ensure that all students and trainees working towards a career in healthcare have access to policies, procedure and support compatible with the principles and good practice in this report.



Action 18.2: All training for students and trainees working towards a career in healthcare should include training on raising and handling concerns.

### **Next steps**

The Council will be collating and sharing examples of what members are already doing related to supporting students in raising concerns. If you have examples from your institution that you would like to share please contact Jonathan Eames. We also support the proposal to extend statutory protection from student nurses to all healthcare students and will highlight this to BIS in the coming months.

### **For more information**

CoDH Contact: [Jonathan Eames](#)