



Whistleblowing Annual Report 2023/2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is the third Annual Whistleblowing Report which is presented to the NHS Borders Board for consideration.

2. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicator	Requirement	Local Update
1	Statement outlining learning, changes or improvements to services or procedures as a result of consideration of whistleblowing concerns	<p>NHS Borders designated Whistleblowing Champion changed to Lynne Livesey, Non Executive from 1 February 2024.</p> <p>NHS Borders designated INWO Liaison Officer also changed to Iris Bishop, Board Secretary from 1 February 2024.</p> <p>There has been one new whistleblowing case raised for the year 2023/24.</p> <p>The learning from this case has involved:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reminding managers and staff involved in any whistleblowing case about the need for confidentiality.• Staff will be reminded of their professional obligations under respective professional standards.

		<p>Individuals decide who they wish to approach from the list of Whistleblowing Confidential Contacts. They may be attracted to a Confidential Contact in the same line of work or someone from a completely different job family. Geography might frame their decision one way or another i.e. speaking to someone out-with their immediate area or vice versa. Thought does need to be given as to whether there is any conflict of interest between potential whistleblower and Confidential Contact e.g. is the working relationship too close, is it unhelpful to seek assistance from someone in the same area. These things can usually be resolved between the whistleblower, Confidential Contact approached and the person who co-ordinates the Confidential Contacts.</p> <p>We have reminded our Independent Contractors – General Dentistry Service, General Practice, Community Pharmacy and Community Optometry of their requirements under the INWO Standards.</p>
2	Statement to report the experiences of all those involved in the whistleblowing procedure	<p>There has been one new whistleblowing case raised for the year 2023/24.</p> <p>Due to confidentiality we are unable to provide commentary on the experience of those involved in this case.</p>
3	Statement to report on levels of staff perceptions, awareness and training	<p><u>Staff Awareness</u> – in October 2023, NHS Borders engaged in the Speak Up week, issuing Staff Involvement and Staff Share communiqués introducing each of the confidential contacts and how and why it was important to raise any whistleblowing issues.</p> <p><u>Staff Training</u> – as at January 2024, 78 NHS Borders staff had completed the Turas whistleblowing modules, with a further 25 staff having accessed the training and currently progressing through it.</p>

		<p>There had been a push to double training uptake in 2023 from the 2022 position of 73 staff completed training and 23 staff were progressing training.</p> <p><u>Board Awareness</u> – The annual iMatter survey outcomes are reviewed by the Board to seek assurance that our staff have the awareness and ability to speak up should they have any concerns.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Confidential contacts have moved to six monthly meetings to share experiences and stay up-to-date with any changes to the INWO Standards.</p> <p>Work is planned in 2024/25 to increase the profile of whistleblowing training through the introduction of the new Whistleblowing Champion, approaching our wider workforce and ethnic minority groups for confidential contacts volunteers, again raising the profile of all of our confidential contacts and explaining how easy and valuable whistleblowing training is to individuals, the organisation and our patients.</p> <p>We are also commencing a review and revision of our investigations training.</p>
4	Total number of concerns received	<p>From 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, NHS Borders received one new set of whistleblowing concerns.</p> <p>During 2023/24 a complaint was received and investigated to see if it passed the definition for whistleblowing. NHS Borders did not think that it met the criteria and took advice from INWO. INWO agreed that the matter referred to internal processes rather than whistleblowing and the matter was concluded outwith the whistleblowing process.</p>

		During 2023/24 there was also on-going engagement with INWO concerning NHS Borders first ever case under the new standards. This concerned the handling of the employee at the centre of the whistleblowing allegations. INWO and NHS Borders agreed an action plan for improving the handling and governance of whistleblowing inside the Health Board and it was adopted by NHS Borders. INWO were satisfied that NHS Borders had appropriately responded to the matter.
5	Concerns closed at stage 1 and stage 2 of the whistleblowing procedure as a percentage of all concerns closed	During 2023-24 Whistleblowing Case 3 from 2022-23 was concluded.
6	Concerns upheld, partially upheld, and not upheld at each stage of the whistleblowing procedure as a percentage of all concerns closed in full at each stage	The whistleblowing case raised in 2023/24 was not upheld. Whistleblowing Case 3 from 2022-23 was not upheld.
7	Average time in working days for a full response to concerns at each stage of the whistleblowing procedure	For Whistleblowing Case raised in 2023/24 the total time taken from notification to resolution was 333 days. For Whistleblowing Case 3 form 2022-23 the total time taken from notification to resolution was 460 days.
8	Number and percentage of concerns at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working day	None. NHS Borders Management and Confidential Contacts endeavoured to keep whistleblowers up to date with progress with their concerns.
9	Number of concerns at stage 1 where an extension was authorised as a percentage of all concerns at stage 1	No cases handled under Stage One required an extension.

10	Number of concerns at stage 2 where an extension was authorised as a percentage of all concerns at stage 2	None. Progress with the investigations was kept under review through regular liaison with senior managers. Formal extensions were not recorded. Going forward improvements to the recording systems will ensure that where extensions are required these are formally applied for at 20 working day intervals and logged in line with the regulations.
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3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The NHS Borders approach to handling whistleblowing allegations under the INWO Standards continues to evolve in line with evolving guidance from INWO.
- 3.2 NHS Borders appreciates that the decision to pursue whistleblowing allegations is not taken lightly and wishes to express its thanks to those parties who took the time and effort to do so during 2023-2024, and also to staff who were involved in responding to concerns, including our network of Confidential Contacts.
- 3.3 In terms of improving our learning from whistleblowing cases, we have developed an improvement plan that remains live and is discussed at our quarterly Whistleblowing Governance Group to ensure progress is being made.

LYNNE LIVESEY
NHS Borders Whistleblowing Champion

IRIS BISHOP
NHS Borders INWO Whistleblowing Liaison