

**NHS Western Isles**



## **Whistleblowing Annual Report**

**2022/2023**

## NHS Western Isles Whistleblowing Annual Report 2022/23

NHS Western Isles had a Whistleblowing Policy in place which was superseded by the new National Whistleblowing Standards which were launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. This report details whistleblowing activity in 2022/23 which will include performance information and an overview of cases that was handled within the reporting period for assurance purposes.

During 2022/23:

There was 1 case from a previous report which has been escalated to stage 3 as to has been sent to INWO for an independent review.

There was also a case initially dealt with as a stage 1 which escalated to stage 2 and has now been escalated to stage 3 – referred to the INWO for independent review.

In both the cases where they have been referred to the INWO all documentation requested by the INWO has been submitted.

There was also one case that was submitted by did not meet the criteria for whistleblowing.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Performance</b>
Total number of concerns received	2 concerns accepted as whistleblowing during 2022/23
Timescales for closure	Stage 1 concern – 7days Stage 1 escalated to stage 2 – 15+21days
Concerns closed at each stage of the process	There was 1 concern logged and closed as stage 1. There was 1 concern which was initially logged as stage 1 which then escalated to stage 2 and has now been escalated to stage 3.
Concerns upheld, partially upheld and not upheld	The stage 2 concern was not upheld.
Number of cases where extension was authorised	Both cases had extensions authorised.
Learning from concerns raised	Any learning which is identified from whistleblowing investigations is input into an action plan to ensure improvements are tracked.
Experience for those raising concerns	Those that do raise concerns are offered the opportunity to further discuss the findings and provide feedback.

### **Staff awareness and training:**

Communication is regularly sent out to all staff via email through the weekly Team Brief which contains information on the role of the confidential contacts. The staff intranet page has a page dedicated to Whistleblowing section which contains useful information for staff on what whistleblowing is, how to raise concerns etc. The intranet page also has links TURAS learn which has modules available to staff which includes information for raising concerns as well as for managers receiving concerns. Posters have also been put up in areas where staff

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are able to view them with information on what Whistleblowing is and how to raise concerns. The Board's Whistleblowing champion (Non-Executive Director) has had articles in the Team Brief also highlighting her role and raising the profile of Whistleblowing.

During 'Speak up Week' (3-7 October 2022) a day was held in Western Isles Hospital where it provided an opportunity to promote and celebrate speaking up and the difference it can make within NHS Scotland. It also provided awareness about our local arrangements for speaking up in NHS Western Isles and promote the role of Confidential Contacts who are available for support. There was also an opportunity to attend this via Teams for staff in more remote locations. Feedback was obtained about the activities during Speak Up Week which has been taken into consideration for future planning of staff engagement events.

A regular supportive and informative forum has been established for the Board's Confidential Contacts facilitated by a triumvirate of the Whistleblowing Champion, Operational Lead for Whistleblowing, and the Head of Human Resources.

### **Statement from the Boards Whistleblowing champion (Non-Executive Director):**

All Health Boards in Scotland have a Non-Executive Director Whistleblowing Champion in place, and in NHS Western Isles it is Sheena Wright. She has offered the following comments on her experience and perspective of whistleblowing work over the reporting period:

*"Steady progress continues to be made in embedding the whistleblowing standards across the organisation. Regular Staff Engagement Walkabouts have been established and a schedule has been developed to ensure that the whistleblowing champion has the opportunity to meet with available staff, face to face, across the NHS Board areas. Communications via a variety of mediums has proven to be successful, with all staff engaged with to date, having an awareness of whistleblowing.*

*It is clear that a positive culture is being developed and that staff feel supported. Work continues to ensure a supportive culture.*

*Finally, recognition and thanks should be given to Louise Sullivan and the Risk Management Team for their continued efforts in supporting the whistleblowing process."*

### **Conclusion:**

Much of the focus during 2022-23 has been on continuing to raise awareness of the standards thus ensuring they are fully embedded throughout the organisation. It has been recognised that whistleblowing can be a daunting and emotive situation for staff who may be involved, and it is crucial to ensure a compassionate supportive approach. Therefore, ensuring that the Confidential Contacts have an enhanced level of support has been a key piece of work this year which will continue into next year.

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The aim for 2023-24 will be to continue with the forum for the Confidential Contacts and to respond to feedback from Speak Up Week last year by providing opportunities for regular staff engagement with leaders across all sites within the organisation. NHS Western isles will also continue to work on ensuring the whistleblowing service is thorough and supportive with improved turnaround times for investigations and to act on any learning identified.