

## **NHS Western Isles**



# **Whistleblowing Quarterly Report**

**April – September**

**2022/2023**

## **1. Introduction**

Whistleblowing in its truest form is an ethical and moral thing to do, and NHS Western Isles is supportive of any member of staff who may have reason to utilise the process. The decision to whistleblow is rarely taken lightly, and NHS Western Isles is therefore committed to offering a compassionate and objective whistleblowing service. Whistleblowing is an important form of feedback and gives NHS Western Isles a chance to receive direct and candid accounts of staff concerns. This in turn offers a key opportunity to learn and strive for improvement.

NHS Western Isles had a Whistleblowing Policy in place which was superseded by the new National Whistleblowing Standards which were launched on 1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 for quarter one and quarter two (April -September) of 2022/23 which will include performance information and an overview of cases that was handled within the reporting period for assurance purposes.

## **2. Performance**

Information about the activity in quarter one and two of 2022/23 will refer to the following stages of whistleblowing, as per the Whistleblowing Standards.

- Stage 1 concerns should result in an on-the-spot explanation and/or action to resolve the matter, with the aim of doing so within 5 working days.
- Stage 2 concerns involve a more thorough investigation, with the aim of responding within 20 working days. Some stage 2 concerns will have originated from stage 1 but escalated if the whistleblower was unhappy with the outcome.
- Stage 3 – If the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the conclusion of the investigation of their stage 2 case, they have the option of contacting the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer for an independent review.

**a. Cases received:**

**Table 1: Cases received and accepted as Whistleblowing**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

The above table gives the numbers of cases that were received, and which met the criteria for whistleblowing, and therefore were taken forwards via the Whistleblowing Standards.

During this reporting period there were 2 further concerns received that did not meet the criteria for whistleblowing during this reporting period. One was taken down the 'business as usual route' agreed by the reporter. The second one was received to the Whistleblowing email address asking for advice and this was responded to suggesting 'business as usual' route – no response was received by the reporter.

**b. Cases closed:**

The information within this section relates to the number of cases closed within the reporting period of April 2022 to September 2022.

One of the requirements of the Standards is that we record whether the outcome of the case was upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

The one that was received in September and was initially taken forward as stage 1 concern was responded to in 15 working days. This has now escalated to a stage 2 concern and has not been closed as this report has been written.

One case from a previous report has been escalated to stage 3 as it has been sent to the INWO for an independent review.

**Closed cases by outcome:**

	<b>Total</b>
Upheld	
Partially upheld	
Not upheld	
<b>Total</b>	

*(Unable to populate this table as the one concern escalated to stage 2 has not been closed).*

**Time to respond (in working days):**

	<b>Total</b>
Stage 1	
Stage 2	

*(Unable to populate this table as the one concern escalated to stage 2 has not been closed).*

**3. Learning**

Any learning which is identified from whistleblowing investigations is input into an action plan to ensure improvements are tracked.

**4. Improvement Work****a. Launch of the Standards**

Although NHS Western Isles launched the Standards in April 2021 there was a significant amount of work ongoing thereafter to ensure that NHS Western Isles would be compliant. The standards were very welcome from an NHS Western Isles perspective, as they gave a focussed opportunity to consider what improvements could be made to the whistleblowing process to greater insure an efficient, fair and compassionate approach.

A Short Life Working Group was convened, which comprised of Board Members, Risk Management, Business Manager, and the Communication Team. The purpose of the group was to oversee the action plan that had been developed and ensure compliance with the Standards. Some of the key actions from the plan were:

	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Progress/Outcome</b>	<b>Complete</b>
1	Communication	Information on the Standards should be included in a Team Brief and the NHS WI internet page, ensuring the process is clear, easy to understand	Information put into Team Brief as planned and new web page developed: <a href="http://wihbweb.wi.scot.nhs.uk/index.php/wi-intranet/adminmenu/whistleblowing">http://wihbweb.wi.scot.nhs.uk/index.php/wi-intranet/adminmenu/whistleblowing</a>	Yes
2	Training	Staff training should be undertaken to ensure that there is awareness of the content of the standards, and how to use it in practice	Two online learning TURAS modules were developed by NHS NES and promoted in a Team Brief for all staff to complete.	Yes
3	Local Practice	The Standards provided the national approach, but not how Whistleblowing should be applied locally. An NHS WI whistleblowing users guide should therefore be written, which details how the concerns will be handled internally.	Standards Staff guidance was developed and is published on our website: <a href="http://wihbweb.wi.scot.nhs.uk/index.php/wi-intranet/adminmenu/whistleblowing/documents-reports">http://wihbweb.wi.scot.nhs.uk/index.php/wi-intranet/adminmenu/whistleblowing/documents-reports</a>	Yes
4	Process	When a new case is received, there should be a robust triaging system in place to ensure that issues are taken forward in the most appropriate way	Triage matrix written and included in aforementioned users guide.	Yes

5	Recording	A new recording system should be implemented that will capture the key areas of a case and the KPIs from the Standards to then allow reports to be generated.	A bespoke form on the Datix system has been created and is now in use.	Yes
6	Governance, reporting and Learning	Quarterly Whistleblowing Activity Report will go to the Staff Governance Committee before going to the Board	In place	Yes
7	Support	Confidential contacts should be put in place for those involved with the whistleblowing process (e.g. the Whistleblower or a manager involved)	Five volunteers have taken on the confidential contact Whistleblowing Role. These are a range of staff from throughout the organisation. Their training is complete, and their contact details published on the Whistleblowing page on NHS WI intranet.	Yes

## 5. Conclusion

During this reporting period there was one concern taken down the whistleblowing route – it was initially taken forward as a stage 1 concern but has since escalated to stage 2. There were a further two concerns received, and these were taken down the business-as-usual route as detailed in page 3.

One case from the previous year has been escalated to the INWO for an independent review and we have shared all information requested by the INWO to enable this to be done.

For ‘speak up week’ in October 2022 NHS Western Isles has planned events in the Western Isles Hospital to promote and celebrate the difference speaking up can make. There will be sessions available for staff to attend face to face or virtually to help staff understand the local arrangements for speaking up in NHS Western Isles and promote the role of Confidential Contacts.

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