

## **NHS Western Isles**



# **Whistleblowing Annual Report**

## **2025/2026**

## **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NHS Western Isles had a Whistleblowing Policy in place which was superseded by the new National Whistleblowing Standards which were launched on 1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 in 2025/26 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 2024/25 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.

The below table breaks down the information for 2025/26.

| <b>Indicator</b>                                 | <b>Performance</b>  |
|--|---|
| Total number of concerns received                | There were no concerns received in 2025/26.<br>Stage 1 – 0<br>Stage 2 - 0 |
| Timescales for closure                           | Stage 1 concern – N/A<br>Stage 2 concern – N/A                            |
| Concerns closed at each stage of the process     | Stage 1 N/A<br>Stage 2 N/A  |
| Concerns upheld, partially upheld and not upheld | N/A   |
| Number of cases where extension was authorised   | N/A   |
| Learning from concerns raised                    | N/A   |
| Experience for those raising concerns            | N/A   |

During this reporting period there were 3 enquiries received to the Whistleblowing team, and these were agreed with the staff to be taken forward as Business as Usual.

There are 3 modules available to staff on the TURAS learn platform to complete, the below figures were extracted from TURAS to monitor completion of module:

- Whistleblowing: an overview:
  - Completed – 619
  - In progress – 30
- Whistleblowing: for line managers:
  - Completed – 127
  - In progress – 17
- Whistleblowing: for senior managers:
  - Completed – 80
  - In progress – 12

NHS Western Isles migrated to TURAS Learn from Learn Pro in November 2023, and prior to this date could not monitor the completion of the Whistleblowing Modules. Now that the data is available, we will ensure there is a focus on encouraging increased completion rates in the coming year.

### **3. Learning**

Any learning which is identified from whistleblowing investigations is populated in an improvement plan and these learning actions are monitored at the Risk Review Group.

#### **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 ensure an efficient, fair and compassionate approach.

##### **b. InPhase Migration**

NHS Western Isles migrated their Risk Management System from Datix to InPhase in May 2025. InPhase has a dedicated application for recording Whistleblowing concerns. The Whistleblowing team worked with InPhase to design a form for the new system which captures the required fields for collating and reporting on Whistleblowing concerns. The new system provides an intuitive and user-friendly portal to capture Whistleblowing data and ensure ongoing robust governance.

#### **Statement from the Board Whistleblowing Champion (Non-Executive Director):**

All Health Boards in Scotland have a Non-Executive Director Whistleblowing Champion in place. Sheena Wright stepped down from the Whistleblowing Champion role on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2026. NHS Western Isles would like to take this opportunity to thank Sheena for her tireless support for Whistleblowing during her tenure. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026 Ian Mccorquodale took over in the role of Whistleblowing Champion for NHS Western Isles. He has offered the following comments on his experience and perspective of whistleblowing work over the reporting period:

*“Whistleblowing and promotion of a positive ‘speak up’ culture remain key agenda items for both priorities the Staff Governance Committee and full Board meetings. Board members actively support an open culture in which staff feel confident to raise concerns, which was reflected in the positive results in the most recent iMatters report, while recognising the ongoing need for continuous improvement.*

*Regular communication is provided to all staff via the weekly team brief, which includes information on the role of Confidential Contacts. National Whistleblowing Standards and Board guidance continue to be actively promoted across the organisation to ensure awareness and accessibility.*

*The staff intranet page has a section dedicated to Whistleblowing which contains useful information on what whistleblowing is and who to contact as well as additional detail which staff can access as required, for example a flowchart of the process. The Intranet page also has links to TURAS learn which has modules available to staff which includes information for raising concerns as well as for managers receiving concerns.*

*Building on the work of the previous Whistleblowing Champion (WBC), I have contributed to staff briefings and bulletins supported staff communications. I will undertake regular visits across workplaces which will begin in Uist and Barra in the coming weeks followed by Harris and Lewis. I want to ensure that all staff and stakeholders whatever their work location will have the opportunity to engage directly, raise concerns, and increase the visibility and accessibility of the WBC role. This will be further supported through initiatives such as speak up week.*

*At a national level, I continue to engage with colleagues across NHS Scotland to share learning, experiences, and best practice, supporting ongoing development and consistency in approach.*

*I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the previous WBC Sheena Wright and Louise Sullivan Head of Clinical Governance and Professional Practice and her team, for their support and assistance during my transition into the role.”*

## **5. Conclusion**

During 2025/2026 there were no concerns taken forward as Whistleblowing concerns.

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. Posters have also been put up in areas where staff are able to view them with information on what Whistleblowing is and how to raise concerns as well. The Boards Whistleblowing champion (Non-Executive Director) has had articles in the Team Brief also highlighting their role and raising the profile of Whistleblowing.

During Speak Up Week from 29th September – 3rd October there were a variety of activities to raise awareness of Speaking Up. This included promotion of the INWO webinars and Whistleblowing Champion visits with the Spiritual Care Team and the Emergency Department.

A forum has been established for the Confidential Contacts where they can link with the Whistleblowing Champion, Director of Human Resources and Head of Clinical Governance and Professional Practice. A recruitment campaign to add to the number of Confidential Contacts is underway which has generated substantial expressions of interest.

