

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

RF23-581

We can confirm East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) holds the information you have requested. Please see our responses in bold, below.

1. When did the Trust first appoint a Freedom to Speak up Guardian, champion, ambassador or equivalent?

2017

2. When were the Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) champions first appointed and on what date was each new FTSU Champion then subsequently replaced between 2017 and present?

The 'Freedom to Speak Up Champion' is a voluntary position. The Champions support the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians to role model and raise awareness of the importance of speaking up, as well as signposting workers to sources of support. Freedom to Speak Up Guardians support workers to speak up, assisting them to identify and overcome barriers they may face whilst doing so. They support the organisation to ensure that speaking up is business as usual.

A small number of Champions were in 'post' in January 2022 when the current Guardians were appointed and subsequently the network has expanded. By June 2023 we had 22 FTSU Champions; however, in June 2023 the FTSU Champion role was superseded by a new 'Connector' role. The Connector role amalgamated a number of pre-existing support roles that the Trust had and now provides easier access to workers needing support with a number of matters. The Connector network began in December 2022 and now consists of 60 trained Connectors.

See also question 5 response.

3. Please give the professional backgrounds and seniority of all the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians or equivalent who have ever been appointed.

EKHUFT currently employs two full-time FTSU Guardians and two Deputy FTSU Guardians on Agenda for Change band 7/8 pay scales all of whom have worked in non-clinical roles within the NHS for differing lengths of time.

Former FTSU Guardians were:

- Band 7 Theatre nurse
- Band 8 Matron
- Consultant Physician
- Consultant Surgeon

4. Is there ring-fenced time for these posts, and if so what is the total WTE?

The FTSU Guardian posts have been substantive (ring-fenced time) since January 2022. We currently employ two full-time FTSU Guardians and two part-time Deputy FTSU Guardians, total WTE: 3.0.



Former FTSU Guardians did not have 'ring-fenced' time for these posts.

FTSU Champions volunteer for the Connector role as part of their substantive posts, and any time for this is at their managers' discretion. The posts are not 'ring-fenced'.

5. Please advise if any Freedom to Speak up Guardians have stepped down, and if so, how long were they in post as Freedom to Speak Up Guardians?

Previous FTSU Guardians:

<u>Start</u>	<u>Background</u>	
2017	Band 7 theatre nurse	stepped down after 6 months in post
2017	Band 8 Matron	stepped down on appointment of substantive Guardian
2017	Consultant Physician	stepped down on appointment of substantive Guardian
2019	Consultant Surgeon	stepped down after 9 months in post

6. Please provide by, financial year, a spreadsheet which gives the number, broad nature of concerns raised with your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian(s) or equivalent, and the outcome.

The number and broad themes of concerns raised are publicly available in the Trust's Board papers on our website. We therefore rely on Section 21 of the FOI Act 2000 (information accessible by other means) in not providing this information.

FTSU reports are included in the following meeting packs:

September 2023*	(page 102/235)
May 2023*	(page 284/301)
September 2022	(page 202/288)
September 2021	(page 238/411)
September 2020	(page 111/240)
February 2019	(page 27/351)
December 2017	(page 14/490)

*Please see <https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/about-us/board-of-directors/#join-the-next-board-of-directors-meeting>.

For all other meeting packs please see: <https://www-archive.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/about-us/boards-and-committees/the-board-of-directors/board-meetings-archive/index.html>.

In order to provide the breakdown of 'outcome', each individual contact/concern would need to be reviewed. We consider that the cost of obtaining and providing this information would exceed the appropriate cost limit, which for non-Central Government bodies this is set at 18 hours, equivalent to £450 at £25 per hour. Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, applies. EKHUFT therefore refuses to answer this part of the request.



7. Please advise how many times your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian(s) or equivalent have escalated any whistleblowing case issues to:
- a. The National Guardian
 - b. The Care Quality Commission
 - c. Any other organisation

No concerns have been escalated outside of the organisation.

(DATE OF REQUEST: 24 OCTOBER 2023)

