

AGENDA – COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

To be held at 2pm on Thursday 05 June 2025
Seminar Room 1, Education Centre, Royal Bolton Hospital

Ref N°.	Agenda Item	Process	Lead	Time
PRELIMINARY BUSINESS				
CG028/25	Chair's welcome and note of apologies <i>Purpose: To record apologies for absence and confirm the meeting is quorate.</i>	Verbal	Chair	
CG029/25	Declaration of Interests concerning agenda items <i>Purpose: To record any Declarations of Interest relating to items on the agenda.</i>	Verbal	Chair	
CG030/25	Minutes of the previous meeting a) 06 February 2025 <i>Purpose: To approve the minutes of the previous meeting</i>	Report	Chair	14:00 (10 mins)
CG031/25	Matters Arising and Action Logs <i>Purpose: To consider any matters arising not included anywhere on agenda, review outstanding and approve completed actions.</i>	Report	Chair	
Proposed resolution : Representatives of the press and other members of the public be excluded from this part of the meeting having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.				
PART 2				
CG032/25	NED Succession Plan <i>Purpose: To receive the NED Succession Plan.</i>	Report/ Presentation	Chair	14:10 (15 mins)
CG033/25	Chair Appraisal Process <i>Purpose: To receive the Chair Appraisal Process.</i>	Presentation	SID	14:20 (15 mins)
REFRESHMENTS				14:30 (10 mins)

CORE BUSINESS

CG034/25	Chair's Update <i>Purpose: To receive the Chair's Update</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	Chair	14:40 (10 mins)
CG035/25	Chief Executive's Report <i>Purpose: To receive the Chief Executive's Report</i>	<i>Report/ Presentation</i>	Chief Exec	14:50 (10 mins)

GOVERNOR INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

CG036/25	Governor Feedback <i>Purpose: To receive feedback from Governors.</i>	<i>Verbal</i>	<i>All</i>	15:00 (05 mins)
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ASSURANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CG037/25	Board Committee Chairs' Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit and Risk Committee Charitable Funds Committee Finance and Investment Committee People Committee Quality Assurance Committee <i>Purpose: To receive the Board Committee Chairs' Reports</i>	<i>Report and Presentation</i>	NEDS	15:05 (30 mins)
CG038/25	Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report <i>Purpose: To receive the Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report</i>	<i>Report & Presentation</i>	DoP	15:35 (10 mins)
CG039/25	2025 Governor Election Update <i>Purpose: To receive the 2025 Governor Election Update.</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	DoCG	15:45 (05 mins)
CG040/25	Membership Engagement Update <i>Purpose: To receive the Membership Engagement Update.</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	DoCG	15:50 (05 mins)

CONCLUDING BUSINESS

CG041/25	Any Other Business <i>Purpose: To receive any urgent business not included on the agenda</i>	<i>Verbal</i>	<i>Chair</i>	15:55 (05 mins)
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Date and time of next meeting:
14 August 2025 at 2pm in Seminar Room 1, Education
Centre

16:00
close

Chair: Dr Niruban Ratnarajah

Draft Minutes of the Council of Governors Meeting

Held in Seminar Room 1, Education Centre

Thursday 06 February 2025 at 14:00

Subject to the approval of the Council of Governors on 03 April 2025

Present

Name	Initials	Title
Niruban Ratnarajah	NR	Chair
Cara Burns	CB	Staff Governor
Dalton Thompson	DT	Public Elected Governor
Dave Bagley	DbA	Appointed Governor
Dawn Yates-Obe	DYO	Appointed Governor
Deborah Parker	DP	Public Elected Governor
Geoffrey Minshull	GM	Public Elected Governor
Grace Hopps	GH	Public Elected Governor
Imteyaz Ali	IA	Public Elected Governor
Jean Cummings	JC	Staff Governor
Kayonda Ngamaba	KN	Public Elected Governor
Melanie Rushton	MR	Appointed Governor
Oboh Achioyamen	OA	Public Elected Governor
Pauline Lee	PL	Public Elected Governor
Samm Cusick	SC	Public Elected Governor

In Attendance

Fiona Noden	FN	Chief Executive
Annette Walker	AW	Chief Finance Officer
Francis Andrews	FA	Medical Director
James Mawrey	JM	Chief of People/Deputy Chief Executive
Martin North	MN	Non-Executive Director
Michelle Cox	MC	Director of Operations
Rachel Carter	RC	Associate Director of Communications and Engagement
Rachel Noble	RN	Deputy Director of Strategy
Seth Crofts	SC	Non-Executive Director
Sharon Katema	SK	Director of Corporate Governance
Sharon White	SW	Chief of Strategy and Partnerships
Tosca Fairchild	TF	Non-Executive Director

Victoria Crompton	VC	Corporate Governance Manager
Apologies		
Alan Stuttard	AS	Non-Executive Director
Catherine Binns	CB	Staff Governor
David Barnes	DB	Public Elected Governor
David Fawell	DF	Public Elected Governor
Fiona Taylor	FLT	Non-Executive Director
Jack Ramsay	JR	Public Elected Governor
Lindiwe Mashangombe	LM	Staff Governor
Malcolm Bristow	MB	Public Elected Governor
Michelle Powell	MP	Appointed Governor
Rae Wheatcroft	RW	Chief Operating Officer
Rebecca Ganz	RG	Non-Executive Director
Sean Harriss	SH	Non-Executive Director
Tyrone Roberts	TR	Chief Nurse

AGENDA ITEM	DESCRIPTION	Action Lead
PART 1		
CG001/25	Chair’s Welcome and Note of Apologies The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and apologies for absence were noted as detailed above.	
GG002/25	Declaration of Interests concerning agenda items There were no declarations of interests in relation to the agenda items.	
CG003/25	Minutes of the previous meetings The Council of Governors reviewed the minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2024, and approved them as a correct and accurate record of proceedings. RESOLVED: The Council of Governors <i>approved</i> the minutes from the meeting held on 05 December 2024.	
G004/26	Matters Arising There were no matters arising to consider.	

CORE BUSINESS

CG005/25 Chair's Report

The Chair provided an update on the Trust's Emergency Department (ED) performance improvements advising that the Emergency Care Improvement Support Team (ECIST) had reviewed urgent care pathways and offered recommendations. Working with ECIST and system partners, the Trust had launched an improvement programme, which had led to a 10% year-on-year performance improvement by January 2025.

NR had met with Emergency Care Improvement Specialist Team (ECIST) who fed back the on the positive leadership within the organisation and how colleagues had embraced the improvement work.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Chair's Update.

CG006/25 Chief Executive Report

The Chief Executive presented her report, which summarised activities, awards and achievements and, the following key points were noted:

- The Neonatal Unit had introduced a new app to keep parents updated and involved in their baby's care.
- Three community nurses had been recognised by the Queen's Nursing Institute for their commitment to ongoing learning, leadership and excellence in healthcare.
- The Trust was using AI (Artificial Intelligence) technology to help doctors to detect diseases, including lung cancer, quicker.
- The Princess Anne Maternity Unit will undergo a major redevelopment to create a new space that is fit for families and the future, removing the (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) RAAC.

FN provided an update on a recent inquest, noting the organisation had reflected on the findings to identify any lessons learnt. Additionally, a recent incident had occurred, which would be investigated in accordance with established processes, with all involved receiving the necessary support.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Chief Executive Report.

CG007/25 Governor Strategy Committee Chair's Update

The Governor Strategy Committee was held on Tuesday 21 January 2025 and was Chaired by Lindiwe Mashangombe. The agenda items included:

- Operational Plan Update
- Independent Investigation into the NHS and Bolton NHS FT's Response to the National Change NHS Consultation
- Governor Strategy Committee Workplan

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 20 May 2025.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Governor Quality Committee Update.

CG008/25 Governor Feedback**BoSCA**

GH reported that she had conducted a BoSCA assessment on C4, noting some limitations regarding space. However, staff were performing effectively within the available environment. She highlighted a positive initiative by the Ward Clerk, who independently implemented a clear sign indicating which Consultant was on duty for the day. Additionally, positive feedback had been received regarding the catering services.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** feedback from Governors.

CG009/25 Committee Chair's Reports**Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee was held on Wednesday 04 December 2024 and Chaired by Alan Stuttard. Key highlights from the meeting were:

- Terms of Reference and Workplan – the Terms of Reference had been updated to include the new areas of Risk and Information Governance and were recommended for approval. The Committee also approved the Annual Work plan.
- The Internal Auditors presented their progress report and advised the final outstanding report from 2023/24 had been completed and would be presented to the next Committee.

Finance and Investment Committee

The Finance and Investment Committee was held on Wednesday 22 January 2025 and Chaired by Becks Ganz. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- The likely variance to plan for 2024/25 was £3.6m which included the impact of the unfunded pay award. There were further developments which would affect the forecast and these were being considered, but Trust was still aiming to achieve plan.
- The assumed Cost Improvement Target (CIP) for 2025/26 was 3% which left a deficit of £32m which would be the subject of further discussion with the Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- There was a risk associated with the Maternity Electronic Patient Record (EPR) go live date.

People Committee

Tosca Fairchild presented her Chair's Report from the People Committee held on Tuesday 21 January 2025. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- Gender Pay Gap/EDS2022 – the Committee commended the report to the Board of Directors for approval.
- EDS2022 2024 – the committee were advised of the progress made in the last 12 months and the need for increased focus on patient equity and health inequalities. The Trust had introduced an EDI Assurance Group to ensure continued momentum.
- Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) - 39 concerns were raised in Q3; Good response to Octobers National Speak Up Month; Common themes in Q3 were Leadership/ Management and behaviour.

Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee was held on Wednesday 22 January 2025, and Chaired by Fiona Taylor. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- Mortality and Learning from Deaths – the mortality rate was above expected due to the inclusion of covid-19 cases in the calculations and other changes in the methodology. Improved documentation and coding practices would support the accuracy of mortality data. An action plan had been developed.
- Still-birth Review – during the review period 21 stillbirths occurred. A thematic analysis of the data had been undertaken using the defined elements of the Saving Babies Lives bundle. An update would be received in six-months.

In response to a query from AS, FA explained that the Summary Hospital-level Mortality Indicator (SHMI) served as a comparator for all organisations across England. Each Trust received a score, indicating whether their performance was within the expected range, above expected, or below expected. The Trust also takes into account the quality of care, and following a review of Pneumonia cases, no fundamental issues with care quality were identified.

FA further clarified that crude mortality data now included all Covid-19 deaths, and given the significant impact of Covid-19 on the Bolton locality, the data aligned with expectations. FA also noted that whilst the Trust historically faced mortality challenges, substantial work had been undertaken to address this. Additionally, the National Medical Examiners review deaths and would raise any concerns if necessary.

AS queried whether a review was conducted following all stillbirths. FA responded that the Trust had recently received the Mothers and Babies: Reducing Risk through Audit and Confidential Enquiries (MBRRACE) Report, which indicated that the Trust's performance was in line with expectations. Janet Cotton, Director of Midwifery, and Nadia Ali-Ross, Clinical Director for Obstetrics, were leading the Saving Babies' Lives and CNST initiatives, under which all stillbirths and neonatal deaths were thoroughly reviewed.

In response to a query from OA, FA advised that an initiative had been launched that when a woman had protected characteristics she would receive an additional review at around the fifth month of pregnancy.

DYO asked whether the Trust had direct communication with the family hubs and FN advised the staff working within the hubs were either Bolton NHS FT staff or were colleagues from partner organisations.

OA queried the number of FTSU concerns raised by BAME staff. TF responded that all themes were reviewed, and appropriate actions taken and various sources of information were examined to identify recurring themes. There was a high level of awareness regarding FTSU within the organisation, and FTSU Champions were available to provide guidance and signposting as required. A diverse group of Champions ensured inclusivity. TF assured that all concerns were thoroughly investigated, with none had been escalated through NHSE or other sources. JM added that the FTSU Annual Report was scheduled for presentation at the Council of Governors in June.

SK highlighted that Jack Ramsay, Public Elected Governor, also served as a FTSU Champion within the organisation and FTSU was one of several channels available for staff to raise concerns. The People Committee received a wide range of information, enabling them to identify any emerging issues.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Committee Chair's Reports.

CG010/25 Charitable Funds Annual Report

Martin North, Chair of the Charitable Funds Committee presented the report advising the annual report and financial statements described the structure, governance and management of the Charity; provided a breakdown of income and expenditure; outlined some of the key priorities for 2024/25 and set out the financial position for the year ending 31 March 2024.

The annual report and accounts would be submitted to the Charity Commission by the deadline of 31 January 2025.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Charitable Funds Annual Report.

CG011/25 Operational Planning 2025/26

The Deputy Director of Strategy presented the 2025/26 Operational Planning update, highlighting the following key points:

- Neighbourhoods: A focus on reform through neighbourhood health services to prevent admissions and improve access to care. Systems are also tasked with improving productivity, balancing budgets, and enhancing the quality and safety of services, particularly in maternity and neonatal care.
- National Priorities: The number of headline targets had decreased to 18, down from 31 last year and 133 in 2022/23, providing clearer focus. More decision-making and funding was now devolved to local systems, with lifted ring-fences allowing for innovation and more efficient use of resources. NHS England and the Government would support local leaders in making tough decisions, including reducing lower-value activities.
- Finance: Financial pressures remained significant, with a 4% spending increase which translated to a 2% real-terms rise for most systems after cost pressures. Providers were expected to make 4% efficiency savings, nearly double last year's target. Tough decisions on service provision and closing lower-value services would be necessary to balance the books.

- Reform and Recovery: The guidance emphasised recovery, but achieving long-term sustainability would require more radical reform and transformation. The ten-year health plan would need to address both recovery and reform simultaneously.

To produce the plan there will be input from across the organisation through a weekly task and finish group, under the oversight of the Executives. The Board would review progress in February, with final review and approval scheduled for March. The full plan would be submitted by 27 March 2025.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Operational Plan.

CG012/25 National Change NHS Constitution Update

The Deputy Director of Strategy presented the National Change NHS Constitution Update advising that in December 2024, the Department of Health and Social Care invited responses to its national consultation on the future of the NHS, with the specific intent of seeking views on what should be included in the new 10 year plan for the NHS. The three main themes were:

- Sickness to prevention
- Hospital to community
- Analogue to digital

The Trust submitted a response in December 2024, but there was still an opportunity for Governors to be involved and responses could be submitted via the portal.

FA highlighted that health inequalities would be a key driver going forward and emphasised that as an organisation who manages its own community services, there was significant potential for the Trust to take actions forward. Finally, SW emphasised that a cultural shift would be required regarding community services, which would be undertaken as a collective effort by the organisation.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the National Change NHS Constitution Update.

CG013/25 iFM Annual Report

Fiona McDonnell, Managing Director, iFM Bolton presented the iFM Annual Performance Report which provided an overarching review of the performance of iFM, including the key achievements and challenges for the period April 2023 to March 2024.

The report also included the iFM Outlook Priorities for the year 2024/25 and the closing thoughts on the financial year 2023/24.

CB queried the Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) Feasibility Study to eradicate RAAC in Microbiology Laboratories and FM confirmed the Trust had been working closely with the national team and expected a response in mid/late summer. AS added that £38m of funding had been secured from the national team to redevelop M Block, to make it fit for families and staff, now and in the future.

NR added that a recent highlight from iFM was how the Security team successfully responded to the riots in which took place in 2024, and also the recent incident that occurred at Oldham.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the iFM Annual Report.

CONCLUDING BUSINESS

CG014/25 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the Chair thanked all for attending and brought the meeting to a close at 16:30.

The next Council of Governors meeting would be held on **Thursday 03 April 2025 at 14:00 – 17:00.**

Name	Role	April	June	August	AMM	December	February
Present							
Niruban Ratnarajah	Chair	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oboh Achioyamen	Public Governor	DNA	✓	DNA	DNA	DNA	✓
Imteyaz Ali	Public Governor	✓	✓	✓	DNA	DNA	✓
Dave Bagley	Appointed Governor	✓	A	DNA	DNA	✓	✓
David Barnes	Public Governor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Catherine Binns	Staff Governor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Malcolm Bristow	Public Governor	A	A	✓	✓	✓	A
Gary Burke	Public Governor	✓	✓	✓	DNA	DNA	DNA
Cara Burns	Staff Governor	✓	A	✓	DNA	✓	✓
Martyn Cox	Appointed Governor				✓	A	DNA
Jean Cummings	Staff Governor	✓	✓	DNA	DNA	✓	✓
Sumirna Cusick	Public Governor	✓	✓	DNA	A	✓	✓
David Fawell	Public Governor				✓	✓	A
Grace Hopps	Public Governor	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓
Pauline Lee	Public Governor	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓

Name	Role	April	June	August	AMM	December	February
Lindiwe Mashangombe	Staff Governor	✓	✓	✓	DNA	A	A
Geoffrey Minshull	Public Governor				✓	✓	✓
Champak Mistry	Public Governor	A	DNA	✓	✓	✓	DNA
Samir Naseef	Appointed Governor	A	A	A	A	A	A
Kayonda Hubert Ngamaba	Public Governor	✓	✓	DNA	DNA	✓	✓
Deborah Parker	Public Governor	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Michelle Powell	Appointed Governor						A
Jack Ramsay	Public Governor	✓	A	✓	A	A	A
Melanie Rushton	Appointed Governor	A	A	DNA	✓	✓	✓
Ann Schenk	Public Governor	✓	A	✓	DNA	DNA	DNA
David Thomas	Public Governor	✓	✓	DNA	DNA	DNA	DNA
Dalton Thompson	Public Governor	A	✓	✓	DNA	✓	✓
Dawn Yates-Obe	Appointed Governor	✓	✓	✓	A	✓	✓
In Attendance							
Francis Andrews	Medical Director	✓	A	✓	✓	A	✓
Seth Crofts	Associate NED	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Victoria Crompton	Corporate Governance Manager	✓	✓	A	✓	✓	✓
Tosca Fairchild	NED	✓	A	✓	A	A	✓
Rebecca Ganz	NED	✓	A	A	✓	✓	A
Sean Harriss	NED	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Sharon Katema	Director of Corporate Governance	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
James Mawrey	Deputy CEO / Chief People Officer	A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fiona Noden	Chief Executive	A	A	✓	✓	✓	✓
Martin North	NED	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alan Stuttard	NED	✓	A	✓	✓	✓	A
Tyrone Roberts	Chief Nurse	A	✓	✓	✓	A	A
Fiona Taylor	NED	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A
Annette Walker	Chief Finance Officer	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓
Rae Wheatcroft	Chief Operating Officer	A	✓	✓	✓	A	A
Sharon White	Chief of Strategy and Partnership	✓	✓	✓	✓	A	✓

Draft Minutes of the Council of Governors Meeting

Held in Seminar Room 1, Education Centre

Thursday 03 April 2025 at 14:00

(Notes to be shared for information as meeting not quorate)

Present

Name	Initials	Title
Niruban Ratnarajah	NR	Chair
Ann Schenk	AS	Appointed Governor
Cara Burns	CB	Staff Governor
Catherine Binns	CB	Staff Governor
Dave Bagley	Db	Appointed Governor
David Barnes	DB	Public Elected Governor
Geoffrey Minshull	GM	Public Elected Governor
Grace Hopps	GH	Public Elected Governor
Jean Cummings	JC	Staff Governor

In Attendance

Alan Stuttard	AS	Non-Executive Director
Annette Walker	AW	Chief Finance Officer
Fiona Noden	FN	Chief Executive
Francis Andrews	FA	Medical Director
James Mawrey	JM	Chief of People/Deputy Chief Executive
Rachel Carter	RC	Associate Director of Communications and Engagement
Rae Wheatcroft	RW	Chief Operating Officer
Seth Crofts	SC	Non-Executive Director
Sharon White	SW	Chief of Strategy and Partnerships
Tyrone Roberts	TR	Chief Nurse
Victoria Crompton	VC	Corporate Governance Manager

Apologies

Dave Thomas	DT	Public Elected Governor
David Fawell	DF	Public Elected Governor
Dawn Yates-Obe	DYO	Appointed Governor
Deborah Parker	DP	Public Elected Governor
Fiona Taylor	FLT	Non-Executive Director
Gary Burke	GB	Public Elected Governor

Imteyaz Ali	IA	Public Elected Governor
Jack Ramsay	JR	Public Elected Governor
Lindiwe Mashangombe	LM	Staff Governor
Malcolm Bristow	MB	Public Elected Governor
Martin North	MN	Non-Executive Director
Michelle Powell	MP	Appointed Governor
Pauline Lee	PL	Public Elected Governor
Rebecca Ganz	RG	Non-Executive Director
Samm Cusick	SC	Public Elected Governor
Sean Harriss	SH	Non-Executive Director
Sharon Katema	SK	Director of Corporate Governance

AGENDA ITEM PART 1	DESCRIPTION	Action Lead
CG015/25	Chair's Welcome and Note of Apologies The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and apologies for absence were noted as detailed above.	
GG016/25	Declaration of Interests concerning agenda items There were no declarations of interests in relation to the agenda items.	
CG017/25	Minutes of the previous meetings The approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 06 February 2025 would be deferred to 05 June 2025.	
G018/26	Matters Arising There were no matters arising to consider.	

CORE BUSINESS

CG019/25	Chair's Report The Chair provided an update, highlighting the achievements of the organisation including the improved Emergency Department (ED) performance. However, the Chair also noted that the upcoming year would be both challenging and demanding in relation to finances, but the Trust would strive to continue to maintain quality and performance.
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The Chair advised the Council of Governors that Tosca Fairchild had resigned from her role as Non-Executive Director, due to personal reasons. Her term concluded on 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Chair's Update.

CG020/25 Chief Executive Report

The Chief Executive presented her report, which summarised activities, awards and achievements and, the following key points were noted:

- The time to get patients out of hospital and back to the comfort of their home has halved due to significant improvements that have taken place. The Integrated Discharge Teams increased their capacity to support the timely discharge of patients who were medically fit.
- The NHS Staff Survey results for 2024 were published. The response rate had increased to 48%, which meant the results were representative of a broader range of experiences.
- The Trust relaunched the Pennies from Pay scheme. Allowing colleagues to round up the pennies from their pay and donate to the charity.
- Our Bolton NHS Charity funded gift packs for patients observing Ramadan. Throughout Ramadan, reasonable and flexible adjustments were made to help staff observe their religious obligations.
- The Trust reiterated the pledge to be a Smoke free hospital site, along with other hospitals in Greater Manchester. To support this a vape zone had been introduced across from the ED and away from the main entrance.

DBarnes queried why the Bolton College of Medical Sciences would be receiving international students from this 2025, but only taking local students from September 2026. NR explained that international students pay privately so universities can use those monies to fully establish courses as they do receive as much funding for UK based students.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Chief Executive Report.

CG021/25 Governor Quality Committee Chair's Update

The Governor Quality Committee was held on Thursday 06 March 2025, and was Chaired by Grace Hopps. The agenda items included:

- Annual Safeguarding Report

- Maternity Survey Presentation
- In-Patient Survey

GH expressed concern regarding the cleanliness issue which was highlighted in the In-patient Survey, noting this had also been identified in previous surveys. TR explained the survey had been conducted in November 2024, and since then, concerns had been raised with iFM Bolton. As a result, iFM had requested a third-party review of their processes, and the Infection Prevention Control Committee, which iFM was now attending more regularly, had full oversight. Measures were already in place, and improvements were expected. However, it was important to acknowledge that some cleanliness issues could be attributed to the aging estate.

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 03 July 2025.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Governor Quality Committee Update.

CG022/25 Governor Feedback

BoSCA

CB advised that she had participated in a BoSCA which was a fantastic visit that made her feel very positive about the inpatient care which was being provided at the Trust.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** feedback from Governors.

CG023/25 Committee Chair's Reports

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee was held on Wednesday 12 February 2025, and Chaired by Alan Stuttard. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- Internal Audit Progress Report – the report summarised the progress against remaining audits from the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan and the progress being made in delivery of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan.
- The committee received the Local Counter Fraud Progress Report which provided an update on all counter fraud activities including ongoing investigations.

- Register of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality – the committee received the report which highlighted the changes to the 2017 guidance documented in the report.

Charitable Funds Committee

The Charitable Funds Committee was held on Monday 10 March 2025, and Chaired by Martin North. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- An update was received on the transfer of the charity's bank account to the Government Banking Service.
- The Committee received the highlight report for Q3 and Q4 and noted that the charity's fund balanced £794k at 31 January 2025.
- The Committee also received the Year in Review 2024/25 report, which provided an account of achievements, challenges and valuable learning from 2024/25 and sets out the areas of focus and growth for 2025/26

Finance and Investment Committee

The Finance and Investment Committee was held on Wednesday 26 March 2025, and Chaired by Becks Ganz. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- The Trust was on plan with a deficit of £2.7m year to date.
- The committee approved the annual accounts being prepared on a going concern basis.
- The Chief Finance Officer also presented the planned building relocations and closures across both acute and community sites, some of which had been implemented. These plans aimed to create a fit-for-purpose estate and drive savings.

People Committee

The People Committee was held on Tuesday 18 March 2025, and was Chaired by Alan Stuttard. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- Staffing summary:
 - The total whole time equivalents (WWTE) increased in January 2025 by 87.
 - The Trust continued to be under the NHSE agency target of no more than 3.2% of total pay bill. However, bank spend had increased in January when compared to the previous month.
 - Vacancy rates reduced slightly to 5.7% which was still under Trust Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and would support staffing during the winter.

- The Health and Wellbeing update was presented and set the wider context in relation to the intrinsic link to how staff were treated and supported to be their whole self at work.

Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee was held on Wednesday 22 January 2025, and Chaired by Fiona Taylor. The key highlights from the meeting were:

- Integrated Performance Report - The Chief Nurse reported on pressure ulcers, infection control and maternity. The Medical Director discussed clinical correspondence, VTE, and mortality and the Chief Operating Officer highlighted A&E indicators, elective performance, and cancer diagnosis achievements.
- Learning Experience Report - five themes were identified: decisions regarding treatment, communication, delay in treatment/escalation, documentation and review of procedures. The report included examples of learning and improvements. A review of how thanks were received was underway and the 'Your Views Matter to Us' initiative was available on the website.

GH queried what the charity monies were being spent on. AS confirmed the charity had funded a number of schemes across the organisation including rest chairs for staff breaks, gaming carts in the children's department and meals for parents with children on paediatric wards.

DBarnes queried whether the financial situation would have any impact on staffing. AS advised that it would and an update on this was included in the next agenda item.

In response to a concern raised by GH, TR confirmed that bank rates across Greater Manchester (GM) had been amended from 01 April 2025 to ensure consistency across the region. This was just one example of the difficult decisions which were having to be made across GM. In the short term it was expected there would be some impact across the organisation, but this would be worked through.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Committee Chair's Reports.

CG024/25 Operational Planning 2025/26

The Chief Executive advised that there had been recent Government announcements regarding the NHS, marking a significant shift in focus for the coming

years. Both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health had emphasised the urgent need for a national focus on NHS priorities. The abolition of NHS England was highlighted as part of broader reform, with clear expectations set for providers to meet national standards while reducing costs to deliver better value for taxpayers.

The Chief Operating Officer, provided an overview of the achievements during 2024/25, despite challenging circumstances. Notable accomplishments included the introduction of a cost-neutral biologics pathway in Dermatology, the acquisition of a new surgical robot, and Bolton's outstanding cancer performance. Elective recovery also showed significant progress, with waiting lists reduced by over 4,000 patients, and waiting times for diagnostic tests and urgent care improved.

The Chief Nurse, outlined the national operational planning standards, which had focused on eight key targets. Despite the financial challenges, TR stressed that the organisation would continue to prioritise frontline care delivery whilst working towards achieving national performance targets. The upcoming NHS Long-Term Plan, expected to focus on shifting services from hospitals to the community, digitisation, and prevention, would further shape the operational strategy.

DBarnes raised the issue of reduction in staffing. JM explained that the organisation had a high turnover of around 12% and was undertaking mitigations to ensure there was no compulsory reduction in corporate staff.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Operational Planning 2025/26 Update.

CG025/25 Staff Survey Results

The Chief People Officer introduced the Assistant Director of Organisational Development who presented the 2024 Staff Survey results advising that the Trust had achieved an overall response rate of 48.1% which was 6% higher than 2023 (41.5%). As the 2024 response rate had increased the results provided a more representative view of our workforce.

Overall, the survey results had seen a positive improvement, and the Trust had significantly outperformed the sector comparator group in the theme of morale and in six of the seven People Promise elements. Additionally, when compared to 2023 the results had significantly improved for 'We are Safe & Healthy' and 'We Work Flexibly and Morale'.

JM added that the survey was undertaken annually, but that regular Pulse surveys were also completed across the organisation. The People Committee received a culture dashboard which would also highlight any issues across the organisation.

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the Staff Survey Results.

CG026/25 2025/26 Quality Account

The Chief Nurse provided a presentation advising that the Quality Account annual report required organisations to select three improvement priorities for the forthcoming financial year, and to publish progress in these areas in the following year's report. Priorities must demonstrate a clear link to quality improvement/patient safety.

Progress would be reported quarterly to the Clinical Governance and Quality Committee and Quality Assurance Committee. The annual summary would be reported in the 2025/26 Quality Account Annual Report

The 2025/26 Quality Account Improvement Priorities were outlined as:

- Recognition and Response to the Deteriorating Patient – to reduce the number of avoidable cardiac arrests across inpatient and community sites by 20% by 31 March 2026 and by a further 30% by 31 March 2028.
- Releasing time to care – phase one - a focus on documentation – to reduce time spent away from patients due to documentation (numerical target to be set following baseline analysis).
- Communication - phase one - 'involvement in decision making' – to improve the response rate with evidence of inclusive feedback

RESOLVED:

The Council of Governors **received** the 2026/26 Quality Account.

CONCLUDING BUSINESS

CG027/25 Any Other Business

There being no other business, the Chair thanked all for attending and brought the meeting to a close at 16:00.

The next Council of Governors meeting would be held on **Thursday 05 June 2025 at 14:00 – 16:00.**

Name	Role	April	June	August	AMM	December	February
Present							
Niruban Ratnarajah	Chair	✓					
Oboh Achioyamen	Public Governor	DNA					
Imteyaz Ali	Public Governor	A					
Dave Bagley	Appointed Governor	✓					
David Barnes	Public Governor	✓					
Catherine Binns	Staff Governor	✓					
Malcolm Bristow	Public Governor	A					
Gary Burke	Public Governor	A					
Cara Burns	Staff Governor	✓					
Martyn Cox	Appointed Governor	DNA					
Jean Cummings	Staff Governor	✓					
Sumirna Cusick	Public Governor	A					
David Fawell	Public Governor	A					
Grace Hopps	Public Governor	✓					
Pauline Lee	Public Governor	A					
Lindiwe Mashangombe	Staff Governor	A					
Geoffrey Minshull	Public Governor	✓					
Champak Mistry	Public Governor	DNA					
Samir Naseef	Appointed Governor	DNA					
Kayonda Hubert Ngamaba	Public Governor	DNA					
Deborah Parker	Public Governor	A					
Michelle Powell	Appointed Governor	A					
Jack Ramsay	Public Governor	A					
Melanie Rushton	Appointed Governor	A					
Ann Schenk	Public Governor	✓					
David Thomas	Public Governor	A					
Dalton Thompson	Public Governor	DNA					
Dawn Yates-Obe	Appointed Governor	A					
In Attendance							
Francis Andrews	Medical Director	✓					
Seth Crofts	Associate NED	✓					
Victoria Crompton	Corporate Governance Manager	✓					
Rebecca Ganz	NED	A					
Sean Harriss	NED	A					
Sharon Katema	Director of Corporate Governance	A					
James Mawrey	Deputy CEO / Chief People Officer	✓					
Fiona Noden	Chief Executive	✓					
Martin North	NED	A					
Alan Stuttard	NED	✓					

Name	Role	April	June	August	AMM	December	February
Tyrone Roberts	Chief Nurse	✓					
Fiona Taylor	NED	A					
Annette Walker	Chief Finance Officer	✓					
Rae Wheatcroft	Chief Operating Officer	✓					
Sharon White	Chief of Strategy and Partnership	✓					

Report Title:	Chief Executive's Report			
Meeting:	Council of Governors	Action Required	Assurance	✓
Date:	05 June 2025		Discussion	
Executive Sponsor	Chief Executive		Decision	

Purpose of the report	To update the Council of Governors on key internal and external activity that has taken place since the last meeting, in line with the Trust's strategic ambitions.
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Previously considered by:	The Chief Executive's Report was presented to the Board of Directors on 29 May 2025.
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Executive Summary	This Chief Executive's report provides an update on key activity that has taken place since the last meeting including any internal developments and external relations.
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Proposed Resolution	The Council of Governors is asked to note the Chief Executive's Report.
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Strategic Ambition(s) this report relates to				
Improving care, transforming lives	A great place to work	A high performing productive organisation	An organisation that's fit for the future	A Positive partner
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Summary of key elements / Implications		
Implications	Yes / No	If Yes, State Impact/Implications and Mitigation
Finance	No	
Legal/ Regulatory	Yes	
Health Inequalities	Yes	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Yes	

Prepared by:	Fiona Noden, Chief Executive	Presented by:	Fiona Noden, Chief Executive
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Ambition 1: Improving care, transforming lives

Our [Endoscopy service has been recognised for providing high quality consistent care to patients](#). The Joint Advisory Group (JAG), which carries out an annual assessment of endoscopy services to ensure high quality care is provided, has awarded accreditation until April 2026. JAG accreditation provides independent and impartial recognition that a service demonstrates high levels of quality, meaning patients can feel confident in their endoscopy service and be assured of receiving great care.

Two of our specialist nurses have been [highlighted and honoured by a patient for the exceptional quality of care and treatment](#) they delivered. The UK heart failure charity, [Pumping Marvellous Foundation](#), presented the 'You're Simply Marvellous' award to acknowledge the work happening to treat heart failure and improve patient outcomes. The awards are measured by patients' experience, and reflect the direct impact outstanding healthcare professionals have in the local community by producing the highest standard of care.

Two [nurses who provided urgent care to a man experiencing a heart attack have received a heartfelt thank you](#), one year on from their life-saving actions. The patient attended Waters Meeting Health Centre in the hope of finding help after experiencing chest pain while travelling to a family wedding. Two of our nurses provided urgent care in the community ensuring that Michael received the care that he needed in hospital. Our staff were pleased to hear that one year on he is well and has transformed his life with healthier eating and more exercise, with the support of his friends and family.

Our services have been [named number one in the country for the accuracy of tests carried out in breast screening](#) in an annual Breast Screening Pathology Audit. These results recognise the importance of ensuring patients receive correct treatment at the earliest opportunity. Good performance in the audit requires excellent working across a number of teams and specialties, from good radiology assessments and biopsies to good pathology interpretation. The full audit is [available to read online](#).

Our Trust is [leading national rankings for delivering faster cancer diagnosis](#) and improving patient experience. The latest figures from NHS England's '28-day [Faster Diagnosis Standard](#) performance' in December 2024 show that 90.9% of patients received their results within the national timeframe and 86.7% in January 2025.

Performance results also show that we were second in the country for the 62-day referral to treatment standard in December 2024, and have consistently remained in the top ten throughout 2025 so far. In reality for patients this means that there are more people being diagnosed within 28 days and receiving treatment within 62 days compared to the same periods in 2023.

One of the improvements that has contributed towards our cancer diagnosis performance is a new triage process in colorectal, which sees a telephone conversation with a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) to determine the most appropriate pathway and get people the help they need, as quickly as possible.

Ambition 2: A great place to work

Our teams continue to embrace the opportunity to use awareness days to highlight important causes or celebrate their professions.

[International Nurses Day gave us an opportunity to celebrate](#) the hard work and dedication of our nurses and shine a spotlight on the incredible difference they make to our Bolton communities. Some of our staff shared [what inspired them to become nurses](#) and what they love about providing care to our patients. In return, [a dedicated page](#) was set up by Our Bolton NHS Charity for people to leave heartfelt words, with the aim of boosting staff morale and reminding them why their work matters so much.

The celebrations continued when children from Kearsley Academy, High Meadows Nursey and our children's ward also gathered to mark the occasion by planting flower seeds on the grounds at Royal Bolton Hospital. A special service was also held in the hospital's Chapel to celebrate our nurses, featuring prayers and the traditional passing of the lamp between nursing staff.

Administrative Professionals Day highlighted the hard work of our administration and clerical colleagues. How our teams work has changed so much over the years, and will continue to be shaped by developments in technology and the changing landscape of the NHS. Our administration teams are often working behind the scenes to play a vital role in making sure that everything is lined up for our patients to receive the care they need.

[International Day of the Midwife](#) provided a great opportunity to celebrate the work of our midwives who provide vital care to babies and families in and around Bolton. Our latest figures show that between March 2024 and March 2025, our midwives helped to deliver 5,047 babies.

We have also celebrated [Operating Department Practitioner Day](#) which enabled our teams to reflect on why they are passionate about the jobs they do, and the incredible difference they make to our patients and families.

We have worked through the 2024 NHS Staff Survey results alongside other Trust wide listening mechanisms and used to feedback to shape and refresh phase two of Our Voice Change Programme. The programme is in place to ensure that we address the issues that matter most to our colleagues, fostering a more inclusive and effective working environment.

As well as reflecting the latest key themes from staff, the second phase will seek to ensure that unheard voices are heard, and that staff at all levels feel able to get involved in driving positive change if they wish. Following the feedback from staff, a recommendation has been made to change the areas of focus to living our values, everyday essentials, digital systems and equipment, and our care. Further refinement of the change teams will take place in the coming months and the names of each key theme will be determined by our staff.

Ambition 3: A high performing, productive organisation

As part of a commitment to providing high-quality services, [we have been reminding patients how important having up to date contact details is](#) when it comes to receiving timely updates about appointments, test results, and treatment plans. Making sure we have accurate data in our electronic patient record and maintaining the correct patient details on our systems also supports our healthcare professionals make the best decisions possible for our patients.

As well as their contact details, our patients are encouraged to keep their diversity details, such as disability status, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, up to date too. This helps ensure care is tailored to their individual needs and enables us to better understand and meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Work has continued to respond to the national measures being taken to address the NHS' finances. As a provider organisation we must deliver against national standards and targets and alongside this, we must reduce our costs to deliver better value for money for the tax-payer.

However, financial challenge does not mean that we will compromise the quality and safety of the care we provide. Our financial improvement programme is underpinned by a robust quality and inequality impact assessment framework, with all schemes reviewed by our medical director and chief nursing officer, to reduce the impact on the quality of care we provide.

As part of our plans, we will be pursuing opportunities to transform our clinical services so that they are delivered in the right place and in a way that is better for the people who use them, and more cost effective to deliver.

NHS England has shared the first version of the Model Integrated Care Board Blueprint with ICB leaders. The document is intended to help ICBs produce plans by the end of May to reduce their running costs by 50%. It sets out an initial vision for ICBs as strategic commissioners, and the role they will play in realising the ambitions of the 10 Year Health Plan. NHS England expects to carry out further engagement over the coming weeks, including with providers such as ourselves, to embed local plans.

The blueprint sets out the three shifts in our collective approach to healthcare delivery - from treatment to prevention, from hospital to community and from analogue to digital.

Ambition 4: An organisation that's fit for the future

The [transformation of our Urgent Care Services](#) is underway. In order to keep services running as building work progresses, the pedestrian access for the Emergency Department (ED) has been relocated to a temporary modular building outside of the entrance. Whether arriving by foot, car or taxi, patients are required to use the new reception where they will be assessed by clinicians, before being seen at the appropriate department, if required.

To support with the changes being made, we are also implementing a one-visitor policy, which asks all those attending the ED to only bring a maximum of one person with them. We greatly appreciate the support we have received as we continue to make changes to our department and services as quickly as possible.

[Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) technology is being deployed to speed up the diagnosis of skin cancer](#) and free up capacity within our dermatology service. DERM, by [Skin Analytics](#), assesses and classifies scans of moles or skin lesions that have been taken by a healthcare professional, after patient is referred by a GP for suspected skin cancer. The AI medical device is trained to classify the most common malignant, pre-malignant and benign skin lesions. Benefits of the technology include reduced caseloads for dermatologists by removing patients with benign lesions and fast-tracking patients with suspected malignant or premalignant lesions who require treatment.

The Trust's Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy is in development and will be shared with all staff in due course to ensure our teams and services are making the best possible use of the technology we have available.

We have been awarded some new [solar panel funding](#) which allows us to continue to introduce sustainable infrastructure that reduces our carbon footprint and delivers on the plan of action set out in our [Green Plan](#). The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has announced a package of £100 million from Great British Energy for the NHS to install solar power and battery storage solutions to help drive down energy bills, offering better value for the taxpayer. As part of this groundbreaking new funding we have been allocated more than £300,000 to install 310 solar panels across our Royal Bolton Hospital site.

This month [we celebrated the official groundbreaking of the maternity and women's health unit re-development](#) at Royal Bolton Hospital. We joined colleagues from our construction partner and specialist contractor, Robertson, at a ceremonial event to mark the work on site beginning, following a period of enabling works.

The project is being funded by NHS England following the identification of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in the existing structure in 2023. The new unit will provide state-of-the-art facilities for women, babies, and families across Bolton and beyond, including a new birthing suite, triage area and gynaecology and early pregnancy unit. Work is expected to be completed in early 2027.

Maternity services remain fully open while the works are ongoing, including all antenatal and postnatal care. Women's health services continue to be run from a separate part of the hospital, and from Lever Chambers Health Centre.

Ambition 5: A positive partner

Our staff have been [shortlisted for three awards at the Greater Manchester Health and Care Champion Awards 2025](#).

The Intravenous (IV) Therapy Team are finalists in the Green Initiative of the Year category for their work to provide care to some patients in their own home environment using elastomeric devices, which

are a greener way forward for administration of antibiotics. The devices allow nurses to only visit patients once a day, instead of three to four times a day.

Since January 2023, the team has used 2,678 less plastic bottles, 4,172 less plastic syringes, 2,678 less plastic giving sets, 4,172 less disposable plastic bags, 4,172 less plastic aprons and 8,344 less gloves. They have saved more than 10,000 miles of travelling, the equivalents of three tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Tyrone Roberts, Chief Nursing Officer, was nominated in the Wellbeing Champion category for launching a free personal training and nutrition programme, which has been delivered to more than 80 colleagues at the Trust. Tyrone has completed qualifications in fitness instruction and personal training with the sole purpose of supporting the health and wellness of his colleagues, tailoring sessions to be inclusive of colleagues working different shift patterns.

Sabana Bhikha, Practice Educator and Neonatal Nurse, was also nominated in the Wellbeing Champion category for her strong passion for wellbeing and ensuring everyone's mental health is prioritised, working tirelessly to boost moral.

Westfield Health has awarded [thousands of pounds' worth of grant funding to Our Bolton NHS Charity](#) to fund sleeper chairs for parents and carers who are staying in hospital with a poorly child. The grant from Westfield Health's Giving Back Committee, worth more than £3,000, will allow the charity to purchase three sleeper chairs in the High Dependency Unit (HDU), helping thousands of parents and carers every year to get a better quality sleep and support their physical and emotional resilience. The new chairs can be positioned upright as armchairs during the day and easily converted into beds in the evening.

Our [school age immunisation service is now provided by Intrahealth NHS Greater Manchester](#) alongside all other teams in the Greater Manchester locality. The service to children and young people will not alter, and a Bolton team will continue to deliver the full offer of school age vaccinations to Bolton schools.

[AO.com have kindly donated a fridge freezer and radio](#) for hard working and dedicated staff working at Royal Bolton Hospital. The donation from the electrical retailer, which is based in Bolton, installed the items in the rest area for staff working on the Acute Medical Unit 1 (AMU1). This unit is the next step following on from the Emergency Department and is extremely busy supporting patients in need of high levels of care.

The donation came after members of the team were looking to purchase new appliances with their own funds and approached AO.com for the best deal. The Smile team at AO.com decided to go one step further and offered to donate the fridge freezer and radio free of charge. The equipment was delivered in time for International Nurses Day on Monday 12 May, to highlight the critical role a healthy workforce plays in improving services and ensuring better outcomes for our communities.

Around the Bank Holiday periods, we have been sharing advice to help people [get to know where to go](#) for healthcare. NHS services traditionally see a rise in demand during bank holidays, with an increase in the number of people attending urgent care services. Knowing where to go for medical help can save people time and ensure they get the right care as quickly as possible.

Our Emergency Department is always here to help anyone in a life or limb-threatening condition and we will always prioritise those who are most ill to make sure they get the life-saving care they need. All people who are unsure about their condition are encouraged to contact NHS 111 online or by phone. The service is able to help with non-urgent health conditions and provide advice on where to get help.

Report Title:	Committee Chair's Reports			
Meeting:	Council of Governors	Action Required	Assurance	✓
Date:	05 June 2025		Discussion	
Executive Sponsor	Director of Corporate Governance		Decision	

Purpose of the report	The purpose of this report is to provide an update and assurance to the Council of Governors on the work delegated to the Board committees.
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Previously considered by:	Board committees and Board of Directors
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Executive Summary	<p>The attached Chair's reports provide an overview of matters discussed at recent committee meetings. The reports also set out the assurance received by the Committee and identifies the specific concerns that required the attention of the Board of Directors.</p> <p>Due to the timing of the Charitable Funds Committee, Finance and Investment Committee and Quality Assurance Committee, verbal updates will be provided to the Council of Governors.</p>
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Proposed Resolution	The Council of Governors are asked to receive the Committee Chair's Reports.
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Strategic Ambition(s) this report relates to				
Improving care, transforming lives	A great place to work	A high performing productive organisation	An organisation that's fit for the future	A Positive partner
✓		✓	✓	

Summary of Key Elements / Implications		
Implications	Yes/No	If Yes, State Impact/Implications and Mitigation
Finance	No	
Legal/ Regulatory	No	
Health Inequalities	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	

Prepared by:	Non-Executive Directors	Presented by:	Non-Executive Directors
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ALERT ADVISE ASSURE (AAA) Key Issues Highlight Report			
Name of Committee /Group:	Audit and Risk Committee	Reports to:	Board of Directors
Date of Meeting:	07 May 2025	Date of next meeting:	25 June 2025
Chair	Alan Stuttard	Meeting Quoracy	Yes
AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2024/25• Going Concern Statement• Draft Annual Accounts 2024/25• Draft Annual Governance Statement 2024/25• Draft Annual Report 2024/25• Audit Strategy Memorandum 2024/25• Internal Audit Progress Reports• 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Internal Audit Plan 2025/26• Counter Fraud Work Plan 2025/26• Counter Fraud Annual Report 2024/25• Modern Anti-Slavery Statement• Annual Register on the use of the Trust Seal• Compliance with Fit and Proper Person’s Test• NHS Provider Licence Compliance Report• Risk Management Committee Chair’s reports	
ALERT			
Agenda Items		Action Required	
ADVISE			
<u>Draft Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2024/25</u> The Committee received the draft Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report and noted that the final version will be produced for the next meeting.			
<u>Draft Annual Accounts 2024/25</u> The Committee received the draft Annual Accounts for 2024/25. The Associate Director of finance provided explanations around some of the key issues arising from the accounts. The accounts show that the Trust had a year end deficit of £8,9470k which after adjustments for impairments, capital donations and centrally procured inventories was an operational deficit of £5,900k which represented the operational deficit as reported to the ICB/NHSE. The Trust had a year end cash balance of £10,6460k and capital expenditure of £16,7030k. The External Auditors are currently undertaking the audit of the accounts. The Committee thanked the ADOF and the Finance Team for completing the Accounts in accordance with the deadline.			
<u>Draft Annual Governance Statement 2024/25</u> The Committee received the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 and noted that the final AGS will be presented at the next meeting.			
<u>Draft Annual Report 2024/25</u> The Committee received the draft Annual Report for 2024/25 and noted that the final Annual Report will be presented at the next meeting.			

ASSURE

Going Concern Statement

The Committee confirmed that the 2024/25 accounts are prepared on a Going Concern basis.

External Audit Strategy Memorandum 2024/25

The External Auditors presented the Audit Strategy Memorandum for 2024/25. The Memorandum outlined the key risks and materiality in the audit of the accounts. The External Auditors advised there were regular updates with the finance team and there are no major issues identified at this time.

Internal Audit Progress Reports

The Internal Auditors presented the latest updates on their reports. A number were in the final stages of completion.

The Internal Auditors presented their draft Head of Internal Audit Opinion (HoIAO) and it was noted that this might change depending on the final outcome of the outstanding reports. Currently the HoIAO draft opinion is showing as moderate assurance which was a reduction from the substantial assurance in 2023/24.

Draft Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

The Internal Auditors presented the draft Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26. A discussion took place on the process for determining the plan and the input of the Committee into the plan. Confirmation was provided by the Internal Auditors that the reviews would cover cyber security and uninterrupted power supplies. The Committee approved the plan.

Counter Fraud Work Plan 2025/26

The Local Counter Fraud Specialist presented the Counter Fraud Work Plan for 2025/26. The Committee approved the plan.

Counter Fraud Annual Report 2024/25

The Local Counter Fraud Specialist presented the Counter Fraud Annual Report for 2024/25. It was noted that there was one case currently with the CPS.

Modern Anti-Slavery Statement

The Director of Corporate Governance presented the Modern Anti-Slavery Statement which the Committee received as assurance of compliance.

Annual Register on the use of the Trust Seal

The Director of Corporate Governance presented the Annual Register on the use of the Trust Seal which the Committee received as assurance of compliance.

Compliance with Fit and Proper Person's Test

The Director of Corporate Governance presented the Fit and Proper Person's Test which the Committee received as assurance of compliance.

NHS Provider Licence Compliance Report

The Director of Corporate Governance presented the NHS Provider Licence report which the Committee received as assurance of compliance.

Risk Management Committee Chair's reports

The Chief Finance Officer presented the Risk Management Chair's reports. A discussion took place around the links between the Risk Management reports and the Board Assurance Framework. The Director of Corporate Governance advised that the triangulation between risk management and the BAF will be discussed at the Risk Management Committee in July before it is presented to the Audit Committee.

New Risks identified at the meeting:

None

Review of the Risk Register:

Not required

Members	Feb	May	June	Sept	Dec	Feb	May	June	Sept	Dec
Alan Stuttard	A	✓								
Sean Harris	A	✓								
Tosca Fairchild	✓									
Fiona Taylor	✓	✓								
✓ = In attendance A = Apologies NA = no longer a member										

ALERT ADVISE ASSURE (AAA) Key Issues Highlight Report			
Name of Committee /Group:	People Committee	Reports to:	Board of Directors
Date of Meeting:	20 May 2025	Date of next meeting:	15 July 2025
Chair	Alan Stuttard	Meeting Quoracy	Yes
AGENDA ITEMS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">NHS Staff Survey Results/Our Voice Change ProgrammeNHS England Health & Wellbeing PresentationFreedom to Speak Up Annual ReportGuardian of Safe Working Annual ReportEmployee Relations UpdateResourcing & Retention Update		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Nursing & AHP Staffing ReportMidwifery Staffing ReportIFM Monthly People ReportCulture DashboardSteering Group Chair ReportsDivisional People Committee Chair Reports	
ALERT			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">	
ADVISE			
<p>NHS Staff Survey Results/Our Voice Change Programme - This item is on the Board of Directors agenda for discussion. The main areas considered at the People Committee are addressed in the cover paper.</p> <p>NHS England Health & Wellbeing Presentation - Following an on site visit from NHS England to Bolton FT earlier this year to showcase the Our Voice Programme, we were asked to present at the North Network Event as a good practice example of how cultural improvement ultimately supports approaches to reduce absence and support wellbeing during challenging times. Over 150 delegates from Trusts across the North West and North East attended the session via Teams and we recived positive feedback around Bolton’s journey and requests for further information both at the event and afterwards. The Committee welcomed this presentation and noted that Bolton it is important that we celebrate our successes and the cultural journey that has been taking place.</p> <p>Resourcing & Recruitment Update - The Committee received a presentation that outlined key resourcing metrics, highlighting both strong performance areas and ongoing challenges. It compares Worked Whole Time Equivalent (WWTE) figures against workforce plans submitted to NHSE for 2024/25 and 2025/26. WWTE rose significantly in March 2025 due to increased substantive and bank staffing, although the year has started off with a stronger Month 1 position which shows a reduction of 122 WWTE. The Committee welcomed the detailed paper but noted further work was required to help triangulate the financial and workforce reporting.</p> <p>Given the importance of controlling our workforce numbers and resultant spend then the Committee heard the following is in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Board level governance. Standing item on both People Committee and Finance Committee. Escalations to BoD via Chair reports. The Quality Assurance Committee will also consider the Quailty Impact Assessments on the proposed plans.Executive and Senior team level governance. WTE reduction monitored via Financial Improvement Group; Resourcing Group and improved forecasting at EPP.			

- Divisional / Departmental. Enhanced forecasting reporting has been developed to look at substantive staffing using recruitment, turnover, and exit data – drilled down at Divisional level. Detailed reporting being provided on agenda for change temporary staffing via NHSP.

It was confirmed that the Trust has supported 79 Mutually Agreed Resignations (MARS). Those MARS supported were linked to the organisationl change programmes in place within the organization.

iFM Monthly People Report – The Committee received the update report on staffing matters relating to iFM. The report provides oversight of the performance of workforce metrics and key people projects in line with the iFM People Plan. The Committee noted that iFM in conjunction with IQVIA were aiming to run the Annual Staff Survey from September2025. The Committee asked that the workforce plans were fully reflected in the overall Trust's plans with regard to the savings plans for 2024/25.

Employee Relations Update – The Committee received the report covering the period July to December 2024 which detailed set out the employee relations activity covering disciplinary,grievance and tribunal cases for the Trust.

Culture Dashboard – Noted.

ASSURE

Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report - This item is on the Board of Directors agenda for discussion. The main areas considered at the People Committee are addressed in the cover paper.

Guardian of Safe Working (GOSW) Annual Report – This item is on the Board of Directors agenda for discussion.

The number of exception reports submitted has remained consistent, with 194 reports this year compared to 193 in the previous year. The primary reason for exception reporting has been junior doctors working above their contracted hours due to high workload and/or low staffing levels, a pattern that has been consistent over the years. Exception reports from resident doctors highlighting missed educational sessions due to service pressures were escalated to the Director of Medical Education as per protocol. Two exception reports were identified as 'immediate safety concerns' by the doctors. These were reviewed by the relevant educational supervisor and GOSW, and concerns were escalated as appropriate. No work schedule reviews or fines have been levied by the GOSW during the reporting period. Most exception reports submitted by junior doctors who worked extra hours have been actioned for payment. The GOSW will continue to liaise with doctors, particularly those grades and specialties not currently exception reporting, to encourage the use of the system. Discussion took place on previous concerns raised about General Surgery and the Committee were advised that this was being addressed through work being ubdertaken on the rotas.

Nursing & AHP Staffing Report – This item is on the Board of Directors agenda for discussion.

The Bi-Annual Nursing and AHP Staffing Report for July to December 2024 highlights significant progress made by Bolton NHS Foundation Trust in ensuring safe and effective nurse staffing levels. The Trust has implemented various initiatives, including revised e-Rostering KPI reports, assurance processes, a revised Heat Map with workforce and quality indicators, red flag reporting, and robust validation methods for Safer Nursing Care Tool (SNCT) census. These efforts have led to improved compliance and increased assurance.

The report also identifies areas for continued improvement to enhance compliance with the National Quality Board (NQB) Workforce Safeguard recommendations. Ongoing transformation initiatives, such as the sign-off of the safe staffing policy, the wider rollout of the enhanced care assessment tool, and the expansion of SNCT into new areas, demonstrate the Trust's commitment to continuous improvement and patient safety. The organisation's efforts to

enhance nurse staffing processes and monitoring arrangements have yielded positive outcomes, ensuring that patient care remains safe, effective, and sustainable. The recommendations and next steps outlined in the report will help the Trust maintain high standards of care and achieve its strategic ambitions, ensuring the delivery of the NQB’s key principles of having the right staff, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time.

Maternity Staffing Report - This item is on the Board of Directors agenda for discussion

The Bi-Annual Maternity Staffing Report for July to December 2024 highlights the ongoing maternity workforce challenges and details the actions taken to mitigate risk to clinical safety and improve training compliance in order to provide assurance of a safe maternity service. Safe staffing levels were maintained during this period, in part mitigated by the ongoing closure of the Beehive and Ingleside birthing options and the reallocation of staff to alternative clinical areas to supplement staffing levels.

New Risks identified at the meeting: None

Review of the Risk Register: None

Members	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug		
Tosca Fairchild (Chair)	✓		A							
Fiona Taylor	✓		✓		✓					
Alan Stuttard	✓		✓ chair		✓ chair					
James Mawrey	✓		✓		✓					
Fiona Noden	✓		✓		✓					
Tyrone Roberts	A		✓		✓					
Sharon White	✓		A		✓					
Sharon Katema	✓		A		✓					
Annette Walker	✓		✓		✓					
Sean Harriss	✓		✓		✓					
Francis Andrews			A		✓					
Seth Crofts	✓		✓		✓					
Rebecca Ganz					✓					

Report Title:	Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Annual Report			
Meeting:	Council of Governors	Action Required	Assurance	✓
Date:	05 June 2025		Discussion	✓
Executive Sponsor	Chief People Officer		Decision	

Purpose of the report	The report outlines the numbers and themes relating to FTSU activity in 2024/25 and how the organisation is promoting a speak up, listen up, follow up culture.
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Previously considered by:	The Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report has been received by the People Committee and Board of Directors in May 2025.
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Executive Summary	<p>Effective FTSU arrangements help to improve patient safety, staff experience and continuous improvement. The Trust’s FTSU approach continues to be embedded to support the organisation to develop an inclusive and transparent culture where speaking up, listening up and following up become business as usual. There were 172 concerns raised by workers via FTSU Route in 2024/25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Many of the concerns relate to behavior and leadership (or both)Work has begun on the new Our Leaders programme and relaunching the Trust values and behavior framework
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Proposed Resolution	The Council of Governors is asked to note the FTSU Report.
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Strategic Ambition(s) this report relates to				
Improving care, transforming lives	A great place to work	A high performing productive organisation	An organisation that’s fit for the future	A Positive partner
	✓			

Summary of key elements / Implications		
Implications	Yes / No	If Yes, State Impact/Implications and Mitigation
Finance	No	
Legal/ Regulatory	No	
Health Inequalities	No	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No	

Prepared by:	Tracey Garde, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Louise Cartin, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian	Presented by:	James Mawrey, Chief People Officer/Deputy Chief Executive
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The People Committee received the FTSU Annual Report 2024-25 at the meeting on 20 May 2025. A full and detailed discussion took place and the committee requested areas of focus moving forward.
- 1.2 Board Members will be aware that the provision of an open, transparent speak up, listen up, follow up culture remains a key priority for Bolton NHS FT.

2. High level summary of findings for Board members

- 2.1 High level summary of FTSU activity is contained within the attachment of the report.

3. People Committee discussions and actions

- 3.1 The People Committee expressed their appreciation for the report and noted the following points during their discussion:
 - Benchmarking data- The Committee asked for assurance that we are in line with our peers with regards case numbers. However, measuring numbers of cases alone can be misleading as what constitutes a good speak up culture- high numbers of concerns or low numbers? High numbers of FTSU concerns in an organisation could suggest a positive speak up culture with high numbers of workers raising concerns via FTSU. It could also indicate a culture where workers were fearful of raising concerns via the usual managerial route. Low numbers could signify a culture where staff are fearful to speak up or it could be an organisation where workers feel confident to speak up to their manager and not require support from elsewhere. Comparing numbers of cases with peers does not therefore tell the whole story. It is more important to understand our own story by effective triangulation of data by all the various speak up routes.
 - Monitoring of detriment faced for speaking up. The FTSU Policy is very clear that any staff member who feels they have faced detriment for speaking up will be taken seriously. Levels of detriment in the organisation is low and nationally is seen in 4% of cases. Any cases of detriment is reportable to the National Guardian Office on a quarterly basis along with numbers and themes of cases. The People Committee has requested that numbers of cases of detriment are included in the FTSU reports going forward.
 - The People Committee asked for guidance on providing feedback to workers who have spoken up particularly when there has been a formal process. The Guardians have to realistically manage the expectations of the worker at the beginning of the speak up process and explain that due to confidentiality they will not receive full and comprehensive feedback of any sanctions that may arise as a result of any formal

investigations. What they will receive is feedback and assurance that the Guardian is satisfied that actions have been taken in line with the organisations policies and procedures. They are also made aware that they may not always get the outcome that they want but they will be assured that their concerns will be taken seriously and appropriate actions will be taken.

- The Guardians were asked about the FTSU Champion Network and were there any gaps. The FTSU Champion Network has grown considerably over the last few years and is a very diverse network of volunteers who are passionate about supporting workers to feel able to speak up safely. As this is a voluntary role, the Guardians are reliant on workers coming forward wanting to take on further training and the additional responsibility. However the Guardians are proud to see so many workers who want to support improving the speak up culture. The Guardians do regularly try and target specific areas where there are no FTSU Champions during walkabouts and in awareness sessions.
- The People Committee asked what the Executive Team and NEDS can do both as individuals and as a collective to help the speak up culture knowing that things are likely to get tougher over the next year and that nationally there has been a plateau in confidence. One of the biggest barriers to a positive speak up culture is Futility. There has been a lot of work done to encourage speaking up. But if people do not see actions as a result then they will lose confidence and believe there is no point. The Guardians therefore ask that they are supported to ensure appropriate actions take place when workers raise their concerns. Listening, Communication and Feedback are also key to building confidence that speaking up, via whichever route, is worthwhile.
- Concerns were raised about anonymous concerns being raised and how can we ensure that workers receive feedback. Speaking up for some workers is a very difficult thing to do, especially in the current climate. Making it easier to speak up by providing workers the option of speaking up anonymously, if they feel that is the only way they feel confident to do so, is a national recommendation. Whilst the Guardians will always promote speaking up is done openly or confidentially, they are also aware that some workers are reluctant to do this.

4. **Recommendation to the Board of Directors**

- 4.1 The Board are asked to note the details of this paper and note that the People Committee will continue to oversee all relevant actions.

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In healthcare, Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) is about feeling able to speak up about anything that gets in the way of doing a great job. That could be a concern about patient safety, a worry about behaviors or attitudes at work, or an idea which could improve processes or make things even better. All leaders must make it their mission to instill confidence in their workers to speak up.

Listening to the concerns of our workers helps us to identify areas for improvement and creates a culture of safety and support for both our workers, our patients and the community we serve. However, relying on workers 'being brave' enough to speak up isn't enough. We also need to ensure as an organisation, we are listening and acting on the information we are hearing.

As Sir Robert Francis said, to "feel pride, not fear" when workers want to speak up – whether that is to voice a concern, or an idea for improvement. Confidence to speak up comes from knowing that when you speak up, what you raise will be actioned appropriately. If speaking up feels futile, workers may remain silent, and we have seen too often that silence can be dangerous. Leaders at all levels set the tone when it comes to fostering a healthy organisational culture. A supportive speaking up culture, led from the top, improves both workers and ultimately patient experience, as well as enhancing organisational performance.

Researchers from the University of Cardiff found that curiosity (in the form of reflexive monitoring and a problem-sensing approach to Freedom to Speak Up) could be recognised as a barometer of speaking up culture. Curious leaders of trusts demonstrated a problem-sensing approach to Freedom to Speak Up and the Guardian role. They consistently monitored the contribution of speaking up to the organisation and normalised rigorous analysis of Freedom to Speak Up data, triangulating with other data sources. Researchers found that achieving change beyond the surface level was dependent on leaders being comfortable "with the idea of being challenged, not comfort-seeking all the time".

Demonstrable benefits of curiosity included improving the experiences of minority communities and workers who may otherwise be seldom heard from, alongside learning that fed into service improvements. By contrast, where incuriosity was normalised, Freedom to Speak Up Guardians often worked within restrictive boundaries and practices in which senior leaders were disengaged and limited data was collected and 'reported', rather than analysed, triangulated and integrated, into routine organisational processes of reflection and improvement. We therefore ask you all to remain curious and be receptive to being positively challenged, as this is the way we can all learn and improve.

FTSU Guardians and Champions work to ensure that those who speak up are thanked, that the issues they raise are responded to, and make sure that the person speaking up receives feedback on the actions taken. They also work proactively to support the organisation to tackle barriers to speaking up.

1.2 This report gives an update from the Trusts FTSU Guardians of the reporting period of 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

1.3 The organisation currently employs 2 part-time FTSU Guardians, each working 22.5 hours per week. The FTSU Guardian role is 50% Proactive and 50% reactive:

- Proactive- Education re: Speaking Up.Removing barriers etc
- Reactive- Responding in a timely way to all contacts made, opening cases and offering appropriate support. Ensuring actions are taken and feedback is provided.

The Guardians Tracey Garde and Louise Cartin are supported by a Network of FTSU Champions who carry this role out on a voluntary basis following interview and training. In 2024/ 25, a further 11 Champions were trained which takes the total to 87 (Appendix one). The Guardians are aiming to develop the diverse FTSU Network even further by having FTSU Champions across all disciplines and in all areas where possible.

The National Guardian's Office (NGO) recommends a clear distinction between the roles of FTSU Champion and FTSU Guardian. Only Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, having received National Guardian's Office training and registered on the NGO's public directory, should handle speaking up cases. This ensures quality and consistency in how workers are supported when speaking up.

Freedom to Speak Up Champions however have a vital role in:

- **Awareness raising** – Ensuring workers understand the importance of speaking up, listening up and following up. Being visible and promoting speaking up and being a positive role model
- **Signposting** – Discussing concerns with workers and providing details of speaking up routes as stated in the organization's FTSU Policy.
- **Promoting a positive speaking up culture**- Supporting the organisation to welcome and celebrate speaking up.

Our FTSU Champion Network is a huge asset in promoting speaking up across all Divisions and across the many diverse roles across the organisation. The Guardians meet with the FTSU Champions quarterly and provide them with the knowledge and skills to promote speaking up across their areas. In October 2024 a successful FTSU Champion Development Day was held and this has become an annual event during National Speak up month.

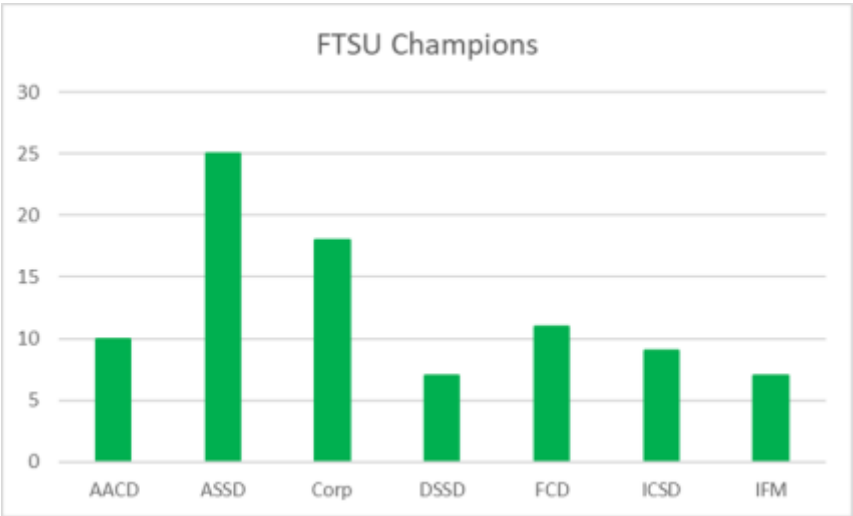


Figure 1: FTSU Champions per Division

1.4 The FTSU Guardians continue to meet with the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of People and Non-Executive Leads for FTSU on a monthly basis. An overview of the cases raised, actions that have been taken and themes identified are shared whilst ensuring that all workers remain completely anonymous. The aim of these meetings is to allow the Chief Executive and Director of People to ensure that policies and procedures are being effectively implemented, help unblock any barriers that enable swift action to be taken to resolve cases and ensure that good practice and learning is shared across the organisation. The NEDs provide an avenue of support to the Guardians and also ensure a positive challenge for the executives.

The Guardians also meet monthly with the Head of HR to discuss any themes that arise from the concerns specifically raised relating to HR policies or processes. The Guardians also continue to meet monthly with the leads for each division to discuss cases in more detail and allow them to be followed up locally.

The Guardians are also supporting the establishment of a monthly ‘round table’ with colleagues from EDI, trade unions, human resources, patient safety, chaplaincy, safeguarding etc. to broadly discuss any themes or trends and triangulate any data. This would also enable quicker identification of issues and aid quicker resolution. The Guardians are aware this process works well in other organisations and prevents silo working.

1.5 The Guardians remain fully engaged with the National Guardian’s Office and the Northwest FTSU Guardian’s Network to learn and share best practice. The Guardian role also supports new local Guardians and acts as a ‘buddy’ providing peer support and guidance to new and junior Guardians across the Northwest. One of Bolton’s FTSU Guardians, Tracey Garde

continues to work in the role of Joint Chair of the Northwest Regional FTSU Guardian Network. This commitment at a regional level raises the profile of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust further and allows the Guardian to work closely with the NGO and other regional leads. Tracey Garde also co- arranged the annual FTSU Guardian Northwest Conference in November 2024.

2.0 FTSU cases

2.1 From the period of 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 a total of 172 cases were reported via the FTSU route. This is an increase of three cases compared to the previous year.

2.2 The graph below shows the number of cases per quarter compared to the number of cases reported since April 2018 (Figure 2).

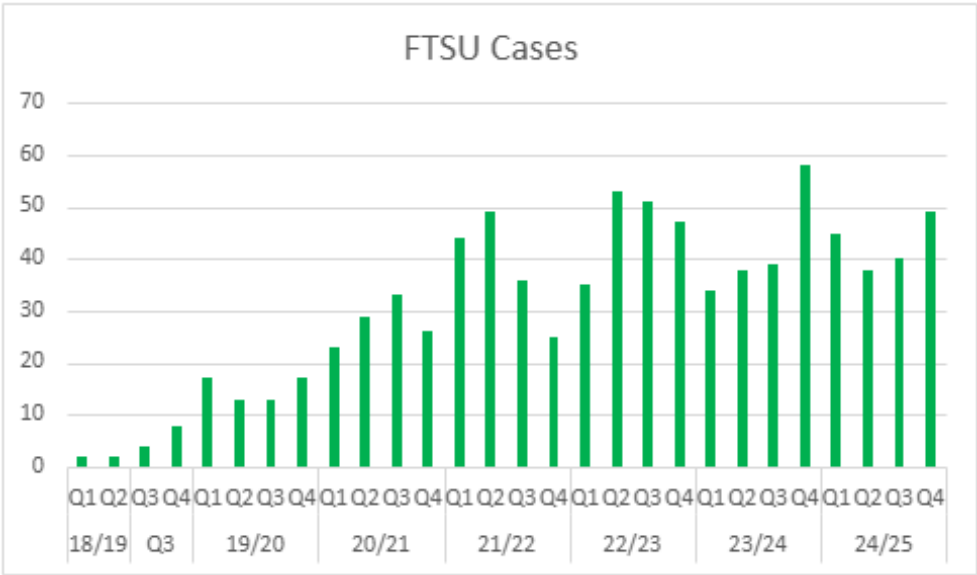


Figure 2: Number of FTSU cases quarterly within Bolton FT

2.3 The Guardians formally report the number of individual cases and themes for each quarterly period to the National Guardian Office.

The Guardians have taken appropriate steps to ensure that workers are being well supported and that they are thanked for raising their concerns and that these concerns are being addressed appropriately and swiftly. The Guardians also ensure that workers receive feedback either directly or indirectly.

2.4 The graph below shows a breakdown of the 172 individual cases raised in 2024/25 by Division (Figure 3) and a breakdown by quarter in each Division (Figure 4)

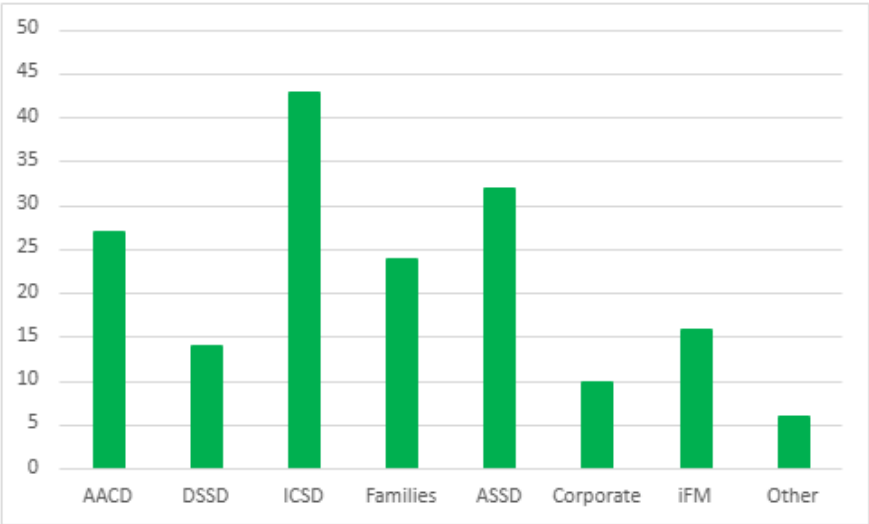


Figure 3: Breakdown by Division in 2024/25

Division	Q1 Total	Q2 Total	Q3 Total	Q4 Total	Annual Total
AACD	4	5	7	11	27
DSSD	4	5	1	4	14
ICSD	19	4	3	17	43
FCD	8	6	5	5	24
ASSD	2	13	11	6	32
CORP	2	1	7	0	10
IFM	5	2	6	3	16
OTHER	1	2	0	3	6
Total	45	38	40	49	172

Figure 4: Breakdown by quarter by Division 2024/25

2.5 For national reporting, everyone that speaks up has to be recorded separately. Therefore, whilst some concerns are collectively conveyed, each worker is captured within the data individually. The highest number of concerns were recorded in ICSD in 2024/25 however 16 of these were from the same team as the Division had specifically requested the Guardians provide some individual 1:1 listening sessions following an anonymous concern raised by a member of a large team.

2.6 All of the FTSU concerns raised have been discussed with the relevant divisional senior leadership teams/managers/HRBM and have been or are being dealt with accordingly. Workers who speak up are not discussed by name with senior management unless the Guardians have the individuals express consent to do so as confidentiality is paramount. However in cases that require a HR process to address the issue then consent is gained to escalate accordingly.

Once the Guardians receive the necessary assurance that the individual case has been dealt with, any lessons that have been learned/actions taken and the individual who has spoken up is satisfied their concern has been listened to and they have received feedback, then the case is then closed in agreement with the individual. Sometimes the outcome may not always be what the worker was hoping for, but as long as they have been listened to and their concerns acted on appropriately, following policy and due process, the Guardians will look to close the case. A confidential feedback survey is then sent to the individual about their speaking up experience within 3 months of their case being closed.

The Guardians also have to record if any detriment has taken place because of speaking up as this is reported nationally to the NGO. Workers who suffer detriment are less likely to speak up in the future, so it is really important to understand about any detriment they believe they have faced and ensure that it is acted on.

The Guardians explain to workers who speak up that the FTSU Guardian is not the fixer of the concern but acts as a conduit for a resolution elsewhere. Realistic options and possible outcomes for those options are discussed with the individual(s). During the meetings where concerns are raised, the welfare of the worker(s) is of paramount importance to the Guardians and the individual will be supported throughout any formal processes. Occupational health support or Vivup support are regularly signposted to, as are on-going follow-up discussions and support should they be required.

2.7 The graphs below provide a breakdown of the concerns raised in 2024/25 by theme across the organisation (Fig 5) and by each Division (Fig 6). In Bolton leadership/support is the top theme reported via the FTSU route in 2024/25 followed by behavior. Inappropriate behaviours and attitudes was the most reported theme nationally in 2023/24 with 38.5% of cases. Nationally 32.3% of cases had an element of worker safety or well being and almost 20% of cases included an element of bullying and harassment. The leadership issue within ICSD was predominantly related to a large number in one specific team where the Guardians were asked

to undertake a series of listening events following an anonymous concern relating to leadership was received.

Some of the learning that has arisen from concerns raised include:

- Cultural awareness and inclusion work following summer riots
- Improved support around access to work for staff with neurodiversity and physical disabilities
- Improving support for SAS Doctors
- Identifying support for rotational AHPs
- Leadership training to promote more compassionate leadership styles
- Fair and equitable recruitment practices
- Fair and equitable rostering practices for additional staffing requirements
- Fair and equitable flexible working agreements

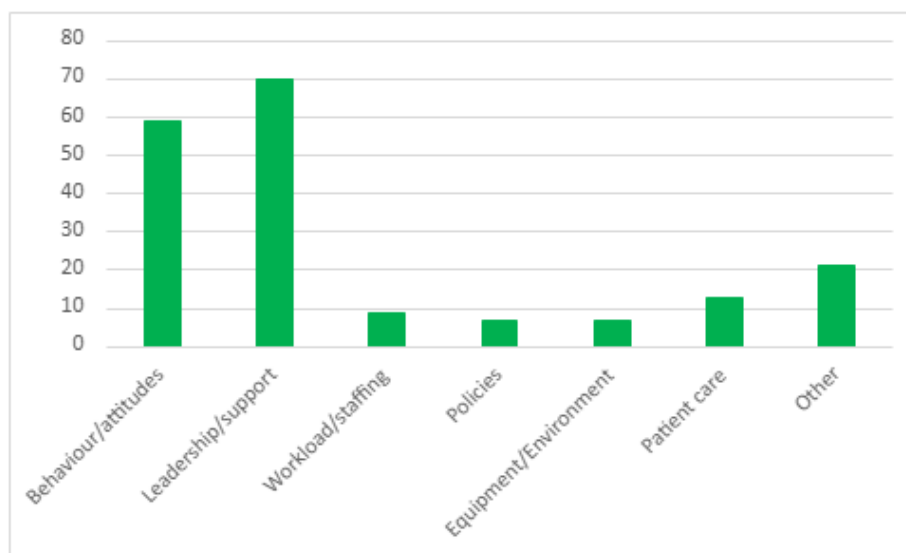


Figure 5-Themes of Concerns across organisation in 2024/25

Theme	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Behaviour/attitudes	13	14	16	16	59
Leadership/support	22	7	20	21	70
Workload/staffing	0	0	0	9	9
Policies	3	3	2	0	7
Equipment/Environment	2	2	3	0	7
Patient care	0	8	1	4	13
Other	5	4	6	6	21

Figure 6: Themes by quarter in 2024/25

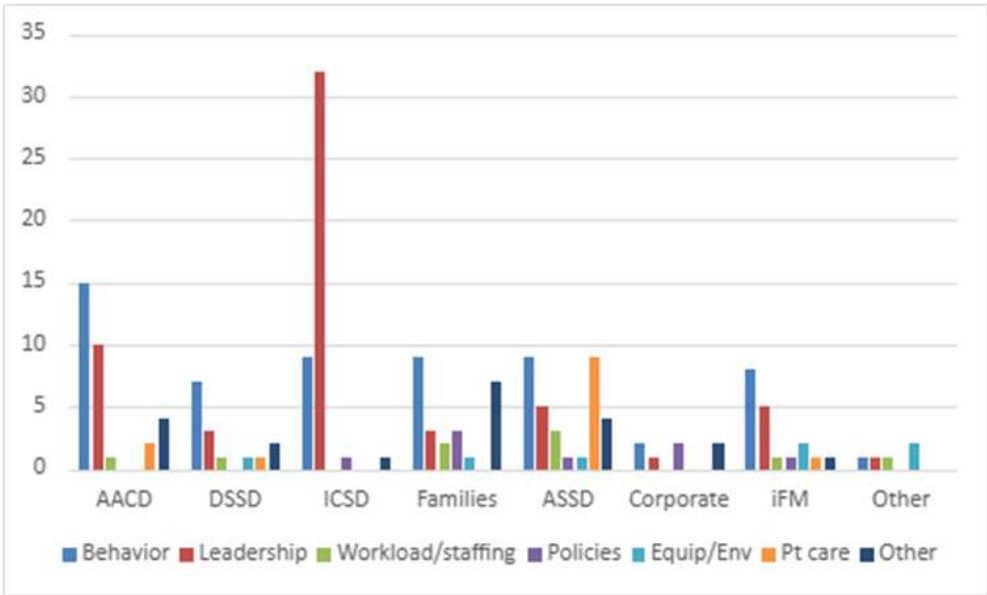


Figure 7-Themes by Division in 2024/25

2.8 The graph below (Figure 8) provides a breakdown of the concerns by staffing group. Registered Nurses/ Midwives was the largest staff group in 2024/25 to speak up using the FTSU route which is not a surprise as they make up the largest staff group in the organisation.

There were 23 cases raised anonymously in 2024/25- many of these were due to the anonymity requested at the listening events carried out in Q4. The Guardians are expecting to see a potential increase in concerns raised anonymously going forward since R code is launched. The QR code will enable workers to complete a form about their concern anonymously or complete their details to request a meeting with the Guardian.

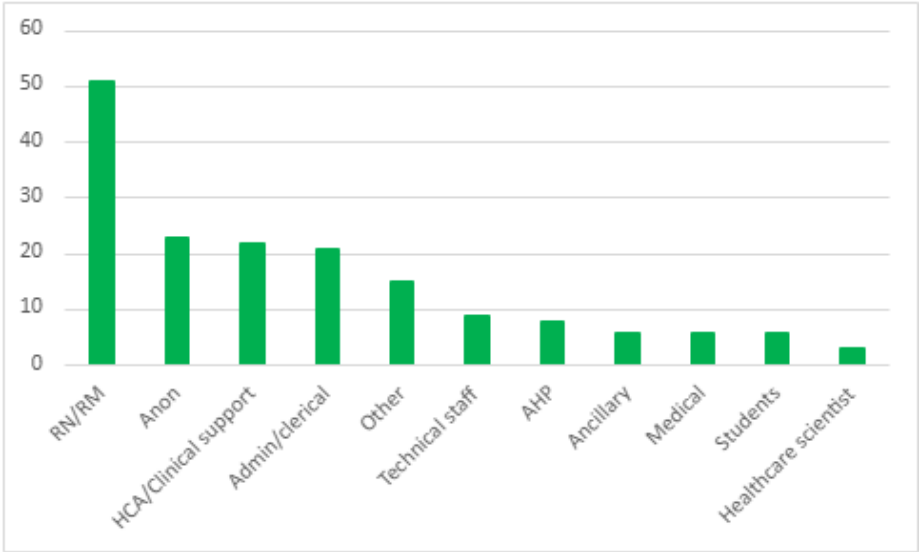


Figure 8- Job roles of workers who have spoken up in 2024/25

2.9 During 2024/25 44 of the 172 concerns were raised by workers from a black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) background (Figure 9 below). This equates to 24.4% of the concerns.

The Guardians continue to be allies to our BAME workforce and we have increased the diversity of the Champion Network with 11 BAME FTSU Champions.

The Guardians welcome that inclusivity will be a thread running through the new Our Leaders programme and that the behavioral framework is being relaunched as part of the Our Voice Programme - Living our Values workstream. The Guardians also welcome that the organisation is fully committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation with a zero tolerance to any behavior that is deemed to be racist.

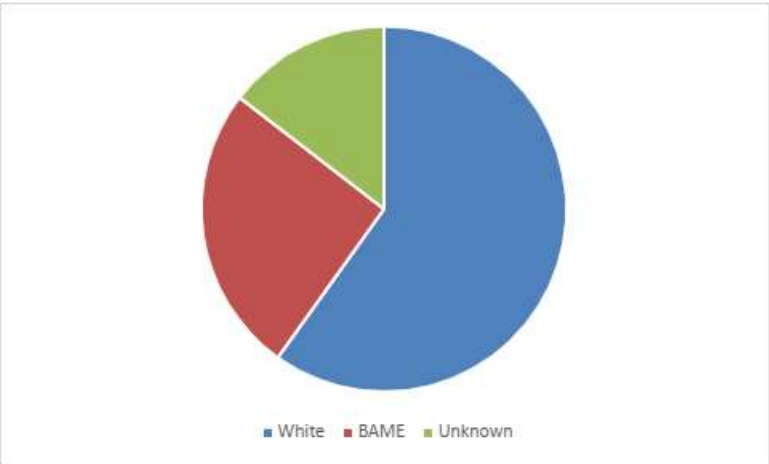


Figure 9: Ethnicity of workers who raised concerns in 2024/25

2.10 Speaking up takes great courage and it is important that the Guardians and Champions respond to individuals in a timely manner. Whilst it is not an NGO metric, the Guardians aim, even outside of normal office hours or days of work, to ensure that all workers receive an initial acknowledgement of their concern within 48 hours. In 2024/25 79.6% of workers received a response/acknowledgement within one hour and 90.11% received an initial response/acknowledgement within 4 hours (Figure 10).

A small number of concerns can be dealt with quite quickly such as signposting or providing information. However, with most concerns, it is necessary to meet with the worker either face to face or remotely to understand their issue and to ensure they receive the required support. These meetings usually take place within the same week and some take place on the same day if there is a Guardian on site and available. The Guardians receive feedback that workers value this timely response as it clearly demonstrates that their concerns are important to the Guardians and the organisation.

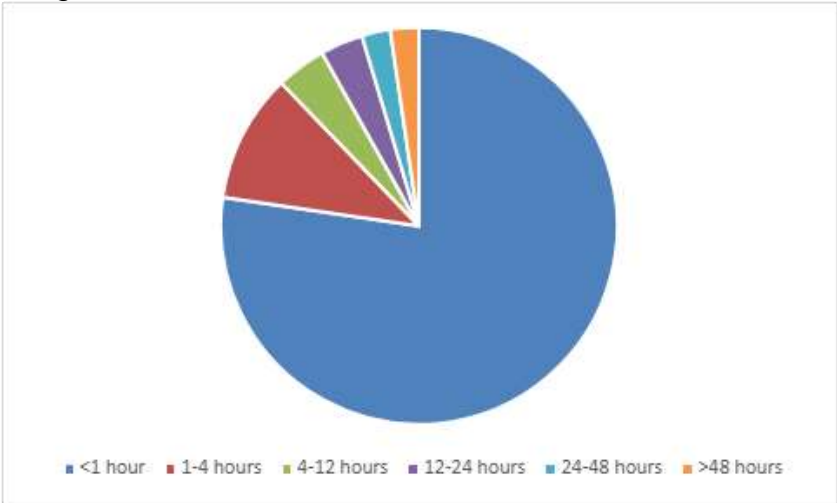


Figure 10: Time to first response in 2024/25

3. Enhancing our approach

3.1 The Guardians are pleased to see the work being carried out within the organisation to respond to the main themes that our workers speak up to FTSU Guardians and Champions about. The two largest themes of concerns relating to leadership and behavior have helped to shape the development of the 'Our Leaders Programme' and the new behavior framework 'Our Way' which has been part of the discussions in the Our Voice Change Programme as part of the Living our Values workstream. The Guardians have been working with the People Promise Manager and colleagues in the OD Team to act as subject matter experts in 2 of the Our Voice Change Programme work streams and are keen to support all the work to improve the overall culture of the organisation going forward.

3.2 During the summer months in a reaction to a horrific event in Southport, we all witnessed the worst racial tensions across the country that have been seen for a long time. Bolton is an extremely diverse community and the events that unfolded caused a lot of fear both in the local community and in the workplace. In 2024, the Guardians, accompanied by NED Seth Croft commenced a series of regular walkabouts across the organisation and during this difficult time, they carried out a check in with large numbers of staff across the site. This was welcomed by all the workers that were seen. Following this, the BAME Staff Network was used as an open listening event for any staff who felt affected by the tensions or for their allies to come together and show support. This was really welcomed and valued by those workers who attended as they felt really listened to and supported by the organisation.

3.3 In July, the National Guardian Dr Jayne Chidgey Clarke met virtually with our CEO Fiona Noden and Chair Niruban Ratnarajah accompanied by the FTSU Guardians. This was a positive meeting to explore how, as an organisation we can really embed our speak-up, listen-up, follow-up culture. A follow up face to face session with the National Guardian and our Board is being set up for April 2025. This clearly demonstrates the commitment the organisation has to ensure all our workers feel safe speaking up and that when they do, they will be thanked, listened to and their concerns addressed. We are looking to make sure all board members have completed their Speak-Up Listen-Up Follow-Up E Learning before April 2025.

3.4 In Q2 the NGO presented their new strategy. Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, National Guardian for the NHS, said:

"While progress has been made, there is still a long way to go before we can say that speaking up is business as usual. That is why for our strategic vision we want to move the dial on Freedom to Speak Up. Of course, workers should be safe to speak up – safety is the bare minimum – what we are aiming to achieve over the next few years is confidence. This comes when workers feel not only encouraged to raise matters, but that actions will be taken when they do."

The National Guardian's Office has set out its six strategic goals to achieve the National Guardian's vision, improving existing services as well as making some step changes to drive further change across the system. These are:

1. Continuing to improve the resources and the offer to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.
2. Developing additional support and guidance for organisational leaders.
3. Using the National Guardian's independent voice to champion Freedom to Speak Up and challenge the healthcare system by raising awareness of issues which affect workers' confidence to speak up.
4. Using the insight gathered by the National Guardian's Office to drive recommendations to improve speak up measures and culture, for example through Speak Up Reviews, and challenging organisations to do better.
5. Improving partnership working with key organisations to deliver change.
6. Improve the organisational maturity and internal infrastructure of the National Guardian's Office to support these ambitions.

Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, said:

"It is of concern to me that this year's NHS Staff Survey results show a lack of improvement nationally in the responses to the questions about speaking up. A lasting cultural shift is needed to realise the ambition of making speaking up business as usual. This strategy will give the National Guardian's Office the framework for us to provide the expert advice, support and challenge to help make that change."

3.5 In July the Guardians supported a Health and Well-being event held on the hospital site and supported a further community event later in the year. This event brought together a wealth of people all with a shared goal of supporting our valuable workers.

3.6 The National Speak Up Month theme for 2024 was 'Listen Up- the power of listening' and the Guardians focused on promoting active and effective listening, and the important part which listening plays in encouraging people to feel confident to speak up.

Confidence to speak up comes from knowing that if you speak up, you will be listened to, and that appropriate action will be taken. We all have a part to play in listening to one another with respect and compassion. Speak Up Month provided an opportunity for leaders at all levels to show they are always available to listen and their commitment to fostering a Speak Up, Listen Up, Follow Up culture in their team.

The Guardians encouraged workers and leaders to complete the Freedom to Speak Up Listen Up and Follow Up Elearning and make a Listen Up Pledge. To show that everyone is 'here to

listen', and visibly supportive of Freedom to Speak Up we also asked workers to take part in "Wear Green Wednesday" on Wednesday 16 October.

The Guardians also hosted their second FTSU Champion Awayday on Friday 11 October to further support the development of our FTSU Champions. The day provided an opportunity to promote the work the organisation are doing to enhance the leadership training offer and develop a positive behavioural framework. There was also an inspiring talk about neurodiversity and the challenges some of our workers face.

The Guardians and Champions also held a variety of awareness sessions such as Tea and Gas, Knit and Natter and a corridor stall to promote speaking up and listening as well as promoting the annual national staff survey.

3.7 In January 2025 the Guardians and one of the FTSU Champions in Maternity were invited to speak at the Greater Manchester and East Cheshire Strategic Clinical Network Event. This was to talk about the importance of promoting a speak up culture in maternity services and how culture can impact on the psychological safety of workers. The presentation was well received and highlighted the journey that Maternity services in Bolton have been on over the last few years.

3.8 In February 2025 Tracey Garde was invited by the Associate Dean, Post Graduate Medicine NHSE (NW) to speak at a Peer Ally Network Event about FTSU and the role of the FTSU Guardian in an acute Trust. The Peer Ally Network has been established to support Doctors and Dentists in training across the North West and encourage them to speak up about any concerns they may have and to ensure they receive the necessary support.

3.9 In March 2025 the results of the 2024 National NHS Staff Survey were published. The survey provides crucial insight into workers experiences. Nationally there has been a plateau in confidence around speaking up. Whilst the numbers of staff speaking up has risen many staff feel that speaking up is futile and feel that their concerns will lead to any change. A speaking up culture without action carries the risk of disillusionment, distrust and disengagement. The fear is that if workers see no actions from the concerns raised they may stop speaking up. As an organisation we must move beyond just encouraging workers to speak up and demonstrate that speaking up leads to meaningful change.

The NGO are calling for three key changes to ensure improvements are made:

1. **Embedding a culture of listening and action-** creating more avenues for workers to speak up is essential but insufficient- there needs to be a stronger focus on listening and acting. There needs to be a consistent and structured approach to ensure concerns are taken seriously and lead to action. This includes:

- Clear standardised processes so that leaders at all levels understand and fulfil their responsibility to act.
- Training that goes beyond awareness- equipping leaders with the skills and accountability to respond effectively.

2. **Greater accountability for leaders and organisations-** there must be stronger accountability for both individual leaders and organisations ensuring that concerns are taken seriously and workers are protected from victimisation. This means:

- Leaders must be held responsible for fostering a culture where staff feel safe to speak up and seeing their concerns addressed.
- Organisations must be accountable for how they handle concerns – not just encouraging to speak up but demonstrating that concerns lead to meaningful action.
- System wide oversight must be strengthened, ensuring that when concerns are raised there is clear follow through and consequences for inaction.

3. **Strengthening and standardising the Guardian role-** there must be greater consistency in how the FTSU Guardian role is implemented across organisations. This includes:

- Ensuring Guardians have sufficient time and resources to carry out their duties effectively.
- Safeguarding their impartiality, recognising that whichever model organisations use presents potential challenges in maintaining impartiality and trust.

In Bolton we have seen a slight improvement in workers feeling safe to speak up about any concerns and the confidence that the organisation will respond however there is room to further improve. A Board Development session is planned with the NGO in April 2025 to identify how as an organisation we can continue on the upward trajectory and build on the work done so far.

The Guardians will continue with the walkabouts with the NEDS and with the FTSU Champions and provide some listening events for workers. Videos are being planned to share some positive staff stories whilst maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

4.0 Recommendations

The Council of Governors is asked to **note** the Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report.

Appendix One

Current FTSU Champions Network April 2025

Kirsty Buckley	Haematology Specialist Nurse	Adult Acute Division
Dr Natalie Walker	Acute Physician	Adult Acute Division
Shauna Barnes	Practice Development Lead Nurse	Adult Acute Division
Alistair Soutar	Senior Charge Nurse A&E	Adult Acute Division
Angela Hughes	Bed Management	Adult Acute Division
Sonia Edwards	HCA B3 Ward	Adult Acute Division
Jess Shields	Ward Manager C2 Ward	Adult Acute Division
Dr Haider Abbas	Doctor in Training	Adult Acute Division
Emma Lewin	ACP A&E	Adult Acute Division
Kyle Turner	Registered Nurse	Adult Acute Division
Julie Pilkington	Assistant Divisional Nurse Director	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Ruth Tyrer	Anaesthetics/Ops Support Manager	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Emma Wheatley	Consultant Anaesthetics/Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Corinne Houghton	Health Care Assistant Recovery	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Lisa Haughton	Health Care Assistant Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Jenny Ruddlesdin	Consultant Orthopaedics/Elderly Med	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Vicky Jolley	RN Breast Unit	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Janet Roberts	Acute Pain Nurse Specialist	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Dr Adam Creissen	Core Surgical Trainee	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Georgina Withington	Registered Nurse Ophthalmology	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Laly Joseph	RN Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Declan Haydock	RN Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Karen Roberts	RN Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Lauren Mayoh	Sister Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Cath Smith	Ward Clerk F6	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Zoe Geddes	Matron Critical Care	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Kay Marshall	Acute Oncology Care Co-ordinator	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Helene Jackson	Registered Nurse	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Jody Peterson	Practice Educator	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Sumera Motala	HCA	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Onaga Oluchukwu	Registered Nurse	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Zeb Boodhun	Divisional Personal Secretary	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Simon Vanderlinden	Senior ODP	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Jenny Allen	Registered Nurse Theatres	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division
Dawn Kelly	Ophthalmology	Anaesthetics & Surgical Division

Rahila Ahmed	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Lead	Corporate Services Division
Neville Markham	Chaplain	Corporate Services Division
Sharon Lythgoe	EPR Project Manager	Corporate Services Division
Gina Riley	Associate Director of Governance/ Pt Safety Lead	Corporate Services Division
Nicola Caffrey	Corporate Business Manager for Medical Director	Corporate Services Division
Robin Davis	TNA	Corporate Services Division
Cherechi Ochemba	Digital Facilitator	Corporate Services Division
Nannette Gallagher Ball	Senior Nurse Educator	Corporate Services Division
Dawn Grundy	People Promise Manager	Corporate Services Division
Lynne Doherty	Staff Engagement Practitioner	Corporate Services Division
Toni Anderton	Senior Practitioner ECIST	Corporate Services Division
Sylwia Desantis	Senior Management Accountant	Corporate Services Division
Jonathan Benn	Clinical Information Assurance Lead	Corporate Services Division
Jack Ramsay	Public Governor	Corporate Services Division
Micha Roberts	TNA	Corporate Services Division
Lyndsey Westby	Clinical Educator	Corporate Services Division
Sarah Richards	Head of People Development	Corporate Services Division
Catherine Spruce	People Development Lead	Corporate Services Division
Louise Quigley	Health Records Reception Coordinator	Diagnostic and Support Services
Suzanne Lomax	Clinical Service Lead –Bereavement Services	Diagnostic and Support Services
Dr Katy Edwards	Consultant Microbiologist	Diagnostic and Support Services
Caroline Burke	Senior Clinical Pharmacist,	Diagnostic and Support Services
Jodie Hughes	Administrator/ Personal Assistant Pharmacy	Diagnostic and Support Services
Louise Smith	Admin Lab Services	Diagnostic and Support Services
Katie Ryan	CT Team Leader	Diagnostic and Support Services
Jeanette Fielding	Midwife	Family Care Division
Vicky O'Dowd	Midwife	Family Care Division
Dr Bim Williams	Obstetrics & Gynaecology Consultant	Family Care Division
Maria Lawton	Pelvic Health Physiotherapist	Family Care Division
Karen Keighley	ASST DND	Family Care Division
Firyal Atcha	Paediatric SALT	Family Care Division
Anne-Marie Price	Medical Secretary	Family Care Division
Louise Cartin (Currently Acting FTSU Guardian)	Enhanced Midwife	Family Care Division

Sharon Foster	Neonatal Nurse	Family Care Division
Sam Carney	Divisional Director of Ops	Family Care Division
Kayleigh Mills	Midwife Ultrasound	Family Care Division
Jenni Makin	Specialist Physiotherapist Community Learning Disabilities Team	Integrated Community Services
Joshua Sharpe	MSK Physio	Integrated Community Services
Sarah Moore-Whitfield	Shared Team Lead / Occupational Therapist	Integrated Community Services
Alison Brennan	DNs Evening/Night Service	Integrated Community Services
Eleanor Speak	OT	Integrated Community Services
Gareth Valentine	Registered Nurse	Integrated Community Services
James Foster	Physiotherapist	Integrated Community Services
Rachel Taylor	Matron	Integrated Community Services
Lisa Brownlow	Divisional Governance Support Manager	Integrated Community Services
Rachel Hemingway	Head of Therapies	Integrated Community Services
Keeley Barlow	Switchboard/ Uniforms Department	IFM
Michelle Barber	Personal Secretary	IFM
David Waite	Materials Management Assistant	IFM
Lorraine Makinson	Recruitment/ Training Officer	IFM
Kirstie Barlow Hart	Domestic Supervisor	IFM
Charlotte Green	Catering Assistant	IFM
William Robinson	Porter	IFM