



# Item No. 11

Meeting Date

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Glasgow City Integration Joint Board Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

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### NHS National Whistleblowing Standards

#### Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on the NHS National Whistleblowing Standards that came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

#### Background/Engagement:

The Standards became effective from 1st April 2021 and set out how the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO) expects all NHS service providers to respond when staff raise concerns, including supporting the person raising a concern.

Whilst focused on the reporting of concerns in relation to NHS services the Standards include specific information for [Health and Social Care Partnerships](#) to assist in implementing the Standards. Specifically, the Standards set out the requirement that those working in Health & Social Care Partnerships must be able to raise concerns about NHS services, and must have access to the support they need to do so, whoever their employer is. Any concerns about the delivery of NHS services must be handled in line with the requirements of these Standards, and anyone raising a concern through these Standards will have access to the INWO, whoever their employer is.

#### Recommendations:

The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

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	<p>a) Note the implementation of the NHS National Whistleblowing Standards and specific guidance in relation to Integration Joint Boards/Health and Social Care Partnerships; and</p> <p>b) Note the proposals at 4.3 and 4.4 to ensure staff across the HSCP are aware of the new standards and the reference to them in the respective policies of the Health Board and Glasgow City Council, and to explore any additional activity required to facilitate the reporting requirements referred to in the Standards.</p>
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**Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:**

Facilitating and supporting the reporting of concerns in relation to NHS services delivered as part of the functions delegated to Glasgow City IJB, and learning from them, is central to being able to deliver the aspirations laid out in the Strategic Plan. Specifically it is imperative that how we support staff and external partners/stakeholders to share concerns with us and how we respond to and learn lessons from them ensures a culture of engagement and involvement in planning and designing services as well as a culture of improvement.

**Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:**

<b>Reference to National Health &amp; Wellbeing Outcome:</b>	The Standards enable concerns to be raised which could be relevant to any aspect of the delivery of NHS services and the learning from them could have an impact on any/all of the national health and wellbeing outcomes.
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<b>Personnel:</b>	Implementation and adherence to whistleblowing policies that comply with the new national standards will ensure staff are adequately equipped to raise concerns, support those who raise concerns and act on the lessons that are learned from any concerns raised.
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<b>Carers:</b>	The Standards are applicable across all NHS services and apply to those who may witness concerns in relation to the delivery of services. This could include carers in receipt of supports to assist them with their caring roles.
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<b>Provider Organisations:</b>	The Standards are applicable across all NHS services and must be accessible to anyone working to deliver an NHS service including third sector providers.
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<b>Equalities:</b>	None
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<b>Fairer Scotland Compliance:</b>	None
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<b>Financial:</b>	None
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<b>Legal:</b>	None
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<b>Economic Impact:</b>	None
<b>Sustainability:</b>	None
<b>Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:</b>	None
<b>Risk Implications:</b>	There is a risk that the respective whistleblowing policies of the partner organisations do not support compliance with the new Standards and/or that staff of the partner organisations are not aware of the requirement to direct concerns in relation to NHS services to the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer.
<b>Implications for Glasgow City Council:</b>	The whistleblowing policy of Glasgow City Council has been reviewed and updated to ensure it supports compliance with the Standards. Council staff working within integrated NHS services require to be aware of the new Standards and their role in following them.
<b>Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow &amp; Clyde:</b>	The whistleblowing policy of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has been updated to take account of the new Standards and have an ongoing role in supporting the reporting requirements in relation to the IJB.

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on the NHS National Whistleblowing Standards that came into effect on 1st April 2021

### 2. Background

- 2.1. In February 2020, the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer published draft Whistleblowing Standards (the Standards), with an anticipated launch date of July 2020. Due to operational constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic this did not proceed.
- 2.2. The Standards became effective from 1st April 2021 and set out how the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer (INWO) expects all NHS service providers to respond when staff raise concerns, including supporting the person raising a concern.
- 2.3. Information around the National Whistleblowing Principles and Standards is available from the website <https://inwo.spsso.org.uk/national-whistleblowing-standards>.

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- 2.4. Whilst directed at reporting concerns in relation to NHS services the Standards include specific information for [Health and Social Care Partnerships](#) to assist in implementing the Standards. The Standards acknowledge that HSCPs are made up of staff working together to deliver services but employed by two different organisations and that people working in joint teams may feel uncomfortable or reluctant to raise concerns related to staff with different lines of management and with different whistleblowing arrangements.
- 2.5. The Standards are applicable across all NHS services and must be accessible to anyone working to deliver an NHS service, whether directly or indirectly. This includes current (and former) employees, bank and agency workers, contractors (including third sector providers), trainees and students, volunteers, non-executive directors, and anyone working alongside NHS staff, such as those in health and social care partnerships
- 2.6. Specifically, the Standards set out the requirement that those working in Health & Social Care Partnerships must be able to raise concerns about NHS services, and must have access to the support they need to do so, whoever their employer is. Any concerns about the delivery of NHS services must be handled in line with the requirements of these Standards, and anyone raising a concern through these Standards will have access to the INWO, whoever their employer is.
- 2.7. The Standards place the responsibility on IJBs for promotion of a culture where concerns are reported and ensuring that all staff, irrespective of employer, are able to raise a concern through a procedure that includes:
- providing clear information about who, staff and other workers can raise concerns with, either within their service or at a more senior level
  - ensuring access to a two stage procedure, where the worker has agreed to use this procedure
  - the availability of support for those involved in raising a concern
  - a requirement to report all concerns to the IJB and the NHS Board on a regular basis
  - a requirement to share information about how services have improved as a result of concerns taking care not to identify who raised the concern
  - Anyone raising a concern about a service provided by NHS Scotland must be signposted to the INWO at the end of this process.

### **3. Current whistleblowing arrangements**

- 3.1 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde formally adopted the National Whistleblowing Standards when they came into effect in April 2021 and developed a [User Guide for Whistleblowing Standards](#) in line with the new Standards to support staff to report concerns with NHS services.

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- 3.2 The NHSGG&C Whistleblowing policy was further informed by a retrospective 3-year review of individual and management of whistleblowing, the recommendations of which were considered and approved by the [Health Board on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021](#). This enabled the policy to be updated to take account of the review and to ensure compliance with the new Standards.
- 3.3 [Glasgow City Council's Whistleblowing Policy](#) is the responsibility of the Council's Head of Audit and Inspection and applies to staff working within the HSCP but employed by the Council. The policy has been updated to include reference to the obligations of Council staff raising concerns about services provided by the NHS to notify the INWO in all cases where such a concern is reported.
- 3.4 Since the Standards went live in April there has been no proactive activity to inform staff working within integrated services as part of the HSCP, particularly those whose route to report a concern is via the Council's process, of the new Standards and the requirement to signpost as appropriate to the INWO.

## 4. Next steps

- 4.1 Staff employed by both the NHS and the Council have access to whistleblowing policies through their respective employers, which are compliant with the obligations set out in the new standards.
- 4.2 It is not proposed that a Whistleblowing policy for Glasgow City HSCP/IJB is required in addition to these two existing policies.
- 4.3 Communication should be prepared for all staff working within the HSCP to ensure awareness of the new Standards, and in particular the new requirements placed on Council staff who may be reporting concerns about NHS services.
- 4.4 Further activity with Council and NHS officers should be undertaken to understand whether and how the requirements of the new Standards in relation to IJB reporting can be supported through existing reporting mechanisms and whether there is a requirement to make any subsequent recommendations to Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee or the IJB in relation to this.

## 5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:
- a) Note the implementation of the NHS National Whistleblowing Standards and specific guidance in relation to Integration Joint Boards/Health and Social Care Partnerships; and
  - b) Note the proposals at 4.3 and 4.4 to ensure staff across the HSCP are aware of the new standards and the reference to them in the respective policies of the Health Board and Glasgow City Council, and to explore any additional activity required to facilitate the reporting requirements referred to in the Standards.

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