

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP Number:

SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up



SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up

	NAME	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
Author	Joanne Fox	HR Manager		February 2024
Reviewer				
Authoriser				

Effective Date:	
Review Date:	February 2025

READ BY			
NAME	TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP Number:

SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up



1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this SOP is to encourage a culture of openness and honesty at all levels within PMG. Staff and leaders alike should feel able to raise concerns without any fear of retribution. From the concerns raised PMG will then instigate appropriate action and learning.

2. INTRODUCTION

Speaking up can encompass many terms like raising a grievance, whistleblowing, making a complaint, suggesting an improvement, or raising a concern. Speaking up has no limitation and covers anything that effects the care of our patients and/ or the wellbeing of our staff. Speaking up is vital to make sure we learn and improve our patient services and our working environment at PMG. The freedom to speak up is a right for anyone who works in health and care at PMG.

Examples of speaking up could include but are not restricted to :

- unsafe care of service users
- unsafe working conditions
- inadequate induction or training for staff
- suspicions of fraud
- lack of, or poor, response to a reported patient safety incident
- a bullying culture.

Here at PMG we want staff to have the confidence to speak up and to know anything they raise will be treated openly, anonymously and in a confidential manner (unless law dictates that the identity of the person speaking up must be disclosed).

When to Speak up

You can speak up about anything that affects the care of our patients, or that has an impact on your working life.

If you decide to speak up, you must have reasonable belief that the issue you are raising is:

- a genuine concern raised in the public interest (so your concern needs to be more than a personal grievance)
- true to the best of your knowledge.
- The law does not state that you need any hard evidence when speaking up, and you don't need to wait until you have proof.

Any information that you do have, however, can be helpful, but you must not start fact finding or investigating the situation yourself.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP Number:

SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up



3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Priory Medical Group (PMG) will be responsible for this standard operating procedure ensuring it is implemented across all locations .
- PMG alongside HR will be responsible for the annual review of it practice and implementation and to make sure staff feel confident and safe speaking up without a fear of retribution.
- All staff have a responsibility to speak up on matters where to the best of their knowledge it affects the care of our patients or effects the working environment at PMG as soon as they become aware of the issue(s) concerned.
- Line Managers are responsible for providing the opportunity and space for any of their staff's to raise concerns and where applicable to escalated issues to the appropriate person/team.
- Our Freedom to Speak up Guardian has the responsibility of being a point of contact for all staff should they feel unable to raise any issues with their Line Managers/ HR/Local Site Partner or external organisation.
- The Guardian also has the responsibility to demonstrate autonomy and to seek independent advice for PMG staff and any of the issues that they raise should it be required.
- PMG have the responsibility to make sure the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian name and contact details are communicated to all staff in a clear and accessible way.
- It is PMG's responsibility to create a culture where there is zero tolerance of anyone attempting to bully or discourage someone else from speaking up.
- It Is PMG's responsibility to be aware of and eliminate where possible any barriers which may prevent staff from speaking up.
- It is PMG's responsibly to make sure all learning and actions following an investigation are implemented, monitored and recorded in line with good governance.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP Number:

SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up



4. SPECIFIC PROCEDURE

- A designated Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is appointed by PMG and details of that person are fully communicated to all staff and displayed on site notice boards and as part of their email signature.
- In the first instance where possible the staff member should raise the concern/suggestion for improvement with their Line Manager/Supervisor.
- If due to the nature of the concern/suggested improvement this is not possible then it should be raised with their Local Site Partner/HR
- If the matter that you are speaking up about is a personal complaint rather than a concern that affects others, then you need to raise a grievance in line with our HR grievance policy.
- Where possible the concern or suggested improvement should be made in writing/by email/in person or over the phone to the appropriate party.
- Should you require reasonable adjustments in order to speak up then please let HR know so these can be actioned where possible.
- Any issue raised or improvement suggested will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt of the concern/improvement plan.
- Once the concern is raised it will be investigated fully by an independent and correctly trained member of staff. They will complete a written investigation report including their findings and any learning outcomes or required actions, within 7 working days.
- The focus of the report will be on safety and improving patient services and creating a safe working environment for all staff.
- Where possible the whole report will be shared with the person who raised the concern unless other staff who are involved would have their right to confidentiality compromised.
- If the matter is of such a complex manner that it requires more than the time stated then you will be advised accordingly and given an alternative date for completion of the investigation/report.
- If you require further support during the process then we would encourage you to please seek help from the National Guardian Office (NGO). Whose role amongst others is to provide such support.
- Alternatively depending on the issue you are raising there are various other organisations who can provide support, including ACAS, Speak Up Direct and Protect. **(Further Details are included in Useful Links)**
- If you do not think your concern has been dealt with appropriately in the first instance or you would prefer to speak to someone else then you have the right at any stage to speak to and raise your concern with the designated Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP Number:

SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up



- If after all available options have been exhausted or if you'd prefer to speak to someone one external to PMG, then please raise your concern with an appropriate external organisation for example either your Trade Union Representative/ Professional Body/CQC or NHS England.
- Any learning outcomes or actions required following the investigation will be shared in a timely manner with all appropriate staff concerned , recorded, and documented .
- The progress on any actions and learning outcomes will be closely monitored to make sure they are acted upon and fully implemented.

5. CHANGE HISTORY

SOP no.	Effective Date	Significant Changes	Previous SOP no.

6. USEFUL LINKS.

Raising a Concern – Contact Information

CQC

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us/report-concern/report-concern-if-you-are-member-staff>

NHS England

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/whistleblowing/raising-a-concern/>

General Medical Council

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/concerns>

Nursing and Midwifery Council

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/concerns-nurses-midwives/make-a-referral/>

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP Number:

SOP Title: Freedom to Speak Up



Health & Care Professions Council

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/concerns/>

[National Guardian - Freedom to Speak Up](#)

[Freedom to speak up: raising concerns \(whistleblowing\) policy for the NHS - April 2016.](#)

[Whistleblowing: list of prescribed people and bodies](#)

Organisations who Provide Support When Speaking Up

[Speak Up Direct](#)

[Protect](#)

[Trade Union Congress](#)

[The Law Society](#)

[The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service](#)

Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

[Mind](#)

[Rethink](#)

[Samaritans](#)