

11 February 2015

NHS Managers
NHS Foundation Trusts

Dear colleague,

As you will know, the recommendations of "Freedom to Speak Up", the review commissioned by the Secretary of State and chaired by Sir Robert Francis QC, were published today. The purpose of the review has been to provide independent advice and recommendations on creating a more open and honest reporting culture in the NHS. The review followed on from the Public Inquiry, also chaired by Sir Robert, into the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust which exposed unacceptable levels of patient care and a staff culture that deterred staff from raising concerns.

Alongside our system partners, we at Monitor have given our support in principle to the recommendations of the review.

The importance of listening to staff cannot be over emphasised. When staff raise concerns, they very often know where things are not working well and when care is not safe, so they can help enormously in improving and ensuring acceptable levels of patient care. This is vital. It is also, of course, core to the work we do at Monitor in our mission to make the health sector work better for patients.

I am writing to you today as managers in the NHS to emphasise both the overall importance of the Freedom to Speak Up review and the importance of you as managers ensuring that all of your staff are made fully aware of the expectation that they will come forward, speak up and raise any concerns, and that they know how to do this outside their line manager relationship if necessary. If at all possible I would encourage you to speak to each of them face-to-face.

I'm sure you will join me in thanking Sir Robert for his work on this review and in hoping that it proves a cultural turning point in the NHS so that flagging up problems, risks and mistakes as they occur - and learning from them to improve patient care - becomes the norm.

Yours sincerely



David Bennett

Chief Executive, Monitor