DATE: May 26th, 2015

Submission of: THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS

Submission to: Consultation on the implementation of the recommendations, principles and actions set out in the Report of the Freedom To Speak Up Review.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is the professional medical body responsible for supporting psychiatrists throughout their careers, from training through to retirement, and in setting and raising standards of psychiatry in the United Kingdom.

The College aims to improve the outcomes of people with mental illness, and the mental health of individuals, their families and communities. In order to achieve this, the College sets standards and promotes excellence in psychiatry; leads, represents and supports psychiatrists; improves the scientific understanding of mental illness; works with and advocates for patients, carers and their organisations. Nationally and internationally, the College has a vital role in representing the expertise of the psychiatric profession to governments and other agencies.

We are pleased to respond to this consultation. Our response has been approved by Dr Owen Bowden-Jones, Associate Registrar for Policy Support.

For further information please contact the Policy Unit on 0203 701 2541 or e-mail hphillips@rcpsych.ac.uk
Royal College of Psychiatrists

Response to: Consultation on the implementation of the recommendations, principles and actions set out in the Report of the Freedom To Speak Up Review

1. Do you have any comments about how best the twenty principles and associated actions set out in the Freedom To Speak Up Report should be implemented in an effective proportionate and affordable way, in local NHS healthcare providers?

Policies and procedures should be an integral part of all NHS organisations that foster the twenty principles set out in the report. As an absolute minimum, each NHS organisation should have clear policies for whistle-blowing, anti-bullying, and harassment. A culture of openness and shared learning should be fostered across each organisation, with procedures to report both incidents and concerns. Staff training should be an integral part of induction and ongoing learning within the organisation.

2. Do you have any opinions on the appropriate approach to the new Local Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Role?

The challenge of this role is likely to vary from organisation to organisation, depending on the culture and openness of each one. This role should be supported at board level and should report to the trust board on a quarterly basis.

3. How should NHS organisations establish the local Freedom to Speak up Guardian Role in an effective, proportionate and affordable manner?

This role will not be cost-neutral. It is essential that this person is experienced, well trained, and supported at a senior level. There should be supplementary Freedom to Speak Up Guardian ‘champions’ across the organisation.
5. What are your views on how the training of the local Freedom to Speak up Guardian Role should be taken up to ensure consistency across NHS organisations?

Training should be widely available and organised at either a regional or national level. There should also be a network for Freedom to Speak Up Guardians to share learning and best practice across organisations.

6. Should the local Freedom to Speak up Guardian report directly to the Independent National Officer or the local Chief Executive of the organisation that they work for?

Both, concurrently. The Royal College of Psychiatrists believes it is important that there is a prompt local investigation of practice when issues do arise, as well as strong national oversight and accountability.

7. What is your view on what the local Freedom to speak up Guardian should be called?

“Freedom to Speak Up Guardian” is somewhat cumbersome, but the College is unable to offer a better alternative at present.

8. Do you agree that the Care Quality Commission is the right national body to host the new role of the Independent National Officer, whose functions are set out in principle 15 of the Freedom to Speak UP Report?

Yes. It is important that the Independent National Officer is hosted within an independent organisation focused on care and quality.

9. Do you agree that there should be standardised practice set out in professional codes on how to raise concerns?

Yes. This is essential to ensure that professionals recognise their responsibilities to ensure safe care and practice.