



Hospital doctors' experiences of whistleblowing

Survey of 526 hospital doctor respondents across the UK carried out by HCSA – the hospital doctors' union from 20th October to 2nd November 2023

Respondents comprised of 393 Consultants, 101 doctors-in-training, 13 SAS and 20 Trust grade doctors.

490 respondents confirmed they work in NHS hospital setting, 24 did not specify and a further 12 are retired or in private practice. Those retired or in private practice are discounted from the study.

390 in England and Wales, 33 in Northern Ireland, 27 in Scotland and 76 did not specify.

Headline statistics

- Over 70% of hospital doctors believe it is **NOT** possible to raise patient safety concerns to their employer without career detriment
- 4 in 5 hospital doctors say the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians initiative has **NOT** given them confidence to speak up in their Trust.
- 96% of hospital doctors feel that short staffing and treatment delays have reduced the patient safety standards you would expect in the NHS
- 95% of hospital doctors feel managers are **NOT** presently held accountable for harm caused to patients due to delays and understaffing, and 91% feel managers should be held accountable
- Three-quarters of doctors have 'spoken up' at work, and the most common issues they spoke up about are (in order) short staffing, delayed treatment and concerns regarding a colleague
- 93% of hospital doctors who have spoken up were **NOT** satisfied with the response from management
- Two-thirds of those who have spoken up have experienced impacts to their personal lives, and two-thirds have experienced detriment in the workplace. Commonly cited impacts and detriment are on mental health, being overlooked for promotion, targeted by management via employment processes or their fitness to practice and issues with relationships in workplace or at home.

Detail + qualitative responses