

Improving workplace justice: A Safe and Accountable People's NHS in Scotland

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Introduction

There is no independent agency to undertake investigations into wrongdoing in the NHS. NHS boards are left to investigate themselves and appraise or acknowledge any shortcomings.

This has resulted in NHS and local authority organisations being able to suppress incidences of wrongdoing and evade accountability. Further, it enables the organisation to victimise staff who try to address wrongdoing, seek effective solutions and hold the organisation to account.

There have been numerous recent high profile cases where NHS staff who used existing procedures to raise concerns have been victimised and forced from their positions of employment because existing 'protections' have failed them. Similarly, there have been numerous recent incidents where NHS Boards have abused their power, failed patient safety and remained unaccountable for the wilful breach of their own standards.

Effective systems and processes, proposed below, will mitigate against wrongdoing in public bodies and protect those who rely on the services provided by public bodies and those who deliver them. These systems should first be established in NHS Scotland where mismanagement and a lack of accountability have had profound and sometimes fatal consequences. This framework will then be adapted to be rolled out across other public bodies.

Motion

The GMB will campaign to establish an independent, properly-resourced, NHS regulatory body with investigatory and disciplinary powers. The remit of this body will include:

- Investigation and responsiveness to serious incidents and concerns regarding poor patient care and clinical negligence in NHS Scotland
- The establishment of a national whistleblowing hotline to provide advice and anonymity to those reporting wrongdoing and to assess such reports with a view to further investigation
- Monitor adherence to national standards of care
- Investigation of outstanding cases of wrong doing within the NHS Scotland towards patients and families and also towards NHS staff (e.g. whistle blowers)
- On concluding investigations, provide recommendations and direction on improving practice and delivery of services.
- Monitor the schedule of implementing recommendations
- Ensure accountability through formal independent regulation informed by evidence from recognised sources
- Establish a people led NHS addressing patient safety concerns and deficiencies in the current NHS Scotland highlighted by professional bodies working alongside advocacy organisations acting on behalf of patients and the people of Scotland

PASSED ON SAT 8th Dec at GMB Branch Edinburgh & Lothian Branch meeting at Timberbush offices, Leith - with unanimous support, with 10 branch members present from across the Lothians and with GMB Regional Officer Barry Fletcher in attendance