

Public Concern at Work

Suite 301
16 Baldwins Gardens
London EC1N 7RJ
Telephone 020 7404 6609
Fax 020 7404 6576
whistle@pcaw.co.uk
www.whistleblowing.org.uk



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Safeguards for NHS whistleblowers

Britain's independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, welcomes the Government's announcement for a public inquiry into the failings at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust and robust new safeguards for whistleblowers.

Acting Director, Cathy James, said "We have to make it easier for all NHS staff to speak up - no matter where they work. To do this all NHS organisations must get whistleblowing right and learn from where Mid-Staffordshire has failed."

Public Concern at Work is currently working with the Social Partnership Forum to produce advice for NHS organisations on how to setup, implement, review and audit effective whistleblowing arrangements. It is hoped the guidance will be published in June 2010 and will help organisations foster an environment where staff are encouraged to speak up and the organisation knows the right way to respond.

"It is also vital that NHS staff know where they can seek advice and who to tell if they have serious concerns about patient safety. There is a need to improve awareness of whistleblower protection and increase access to NHS regulators for NHS staff who may need to go outside their workplace to raise a concern. As the law makes clear, staff should also be able to take a concern outside the organisation where they do not feel they can raise it internally." Ms James concluded.

For comment, contact Cathy James on 07899 000 472 or 020 7404 6609

Public Concern at Work is an independent, self-funding whistleblowing charity. It runs a free confidential helpline on 020 7404 6609 for people with whistleblowing concerns; promotes the public interest through its policy work; and advises public bodies, business, regulators and unions on how to create more open and accountable cultures. Over the years, we have advised thousands of NHS staff members; worked with NHS organisations to help them meet best practice; and made submissions to the Shipman, Ayling, Neary and Francis Inquiries. In April 2008, we won the competitive tender to provide independent and confidential advice to staff and policy advice to organisations throughout the NHS.

Making whistleblowing work