



University Hospitals of Leicester
NHS Trust

University Hospitals of Leicester

Q4 and Annual Report

1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026



Circulation:

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UHL FTSU Data Dashboard - Quarter 4 2026 – Section 1

Cases		
	Q3	Q4
New Cases this quarter	112	116
Cases closed this quarter	69	113
Cases remaining open this quarter	60	78
Anonymous Cases	2	6

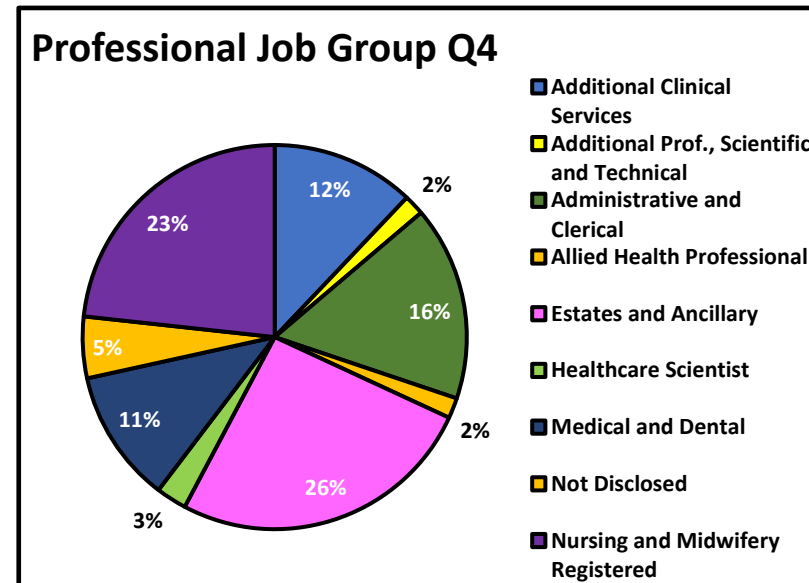
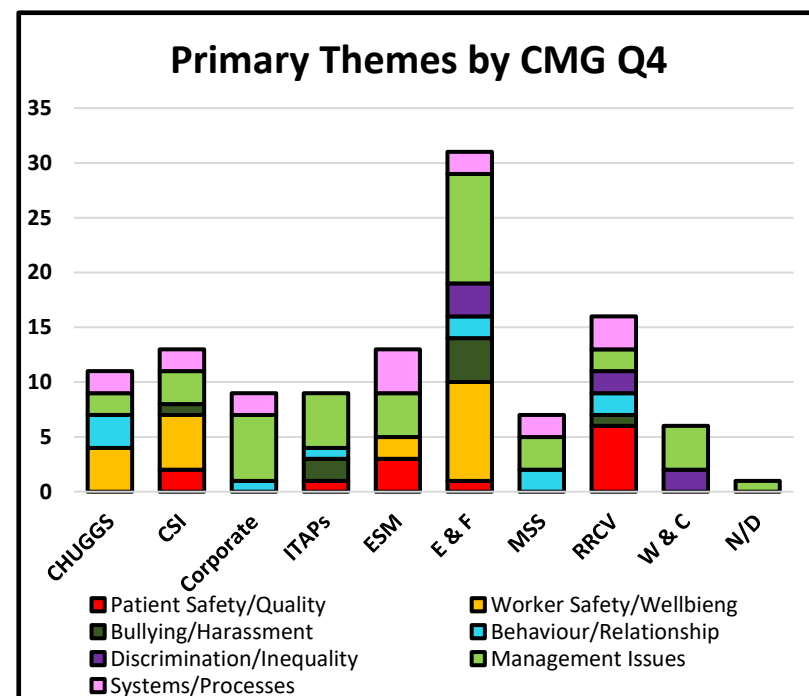
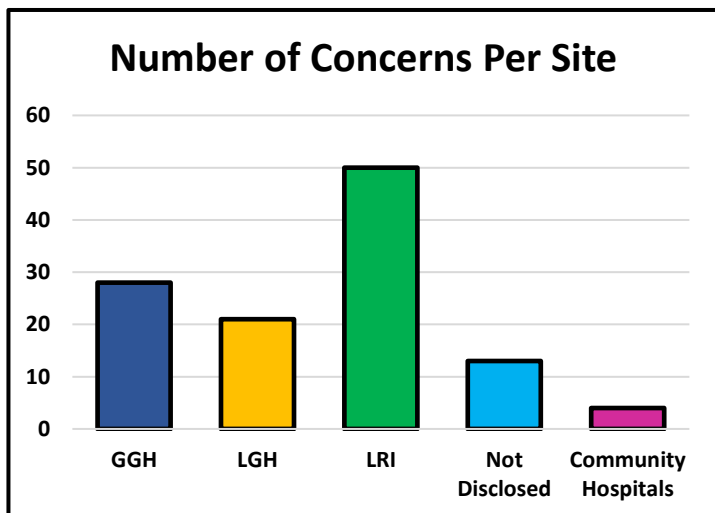
RAG Status		
	Q3	Q4
Red	3	1
Amber	49	61
Green	60	39
White	0	0

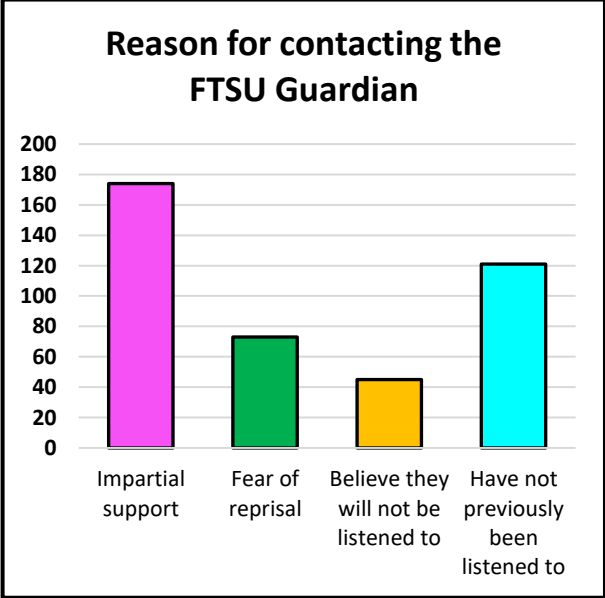
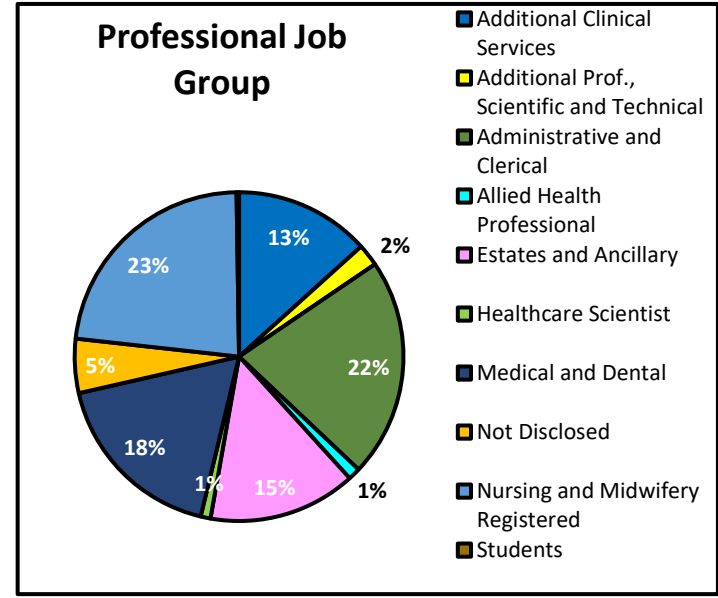
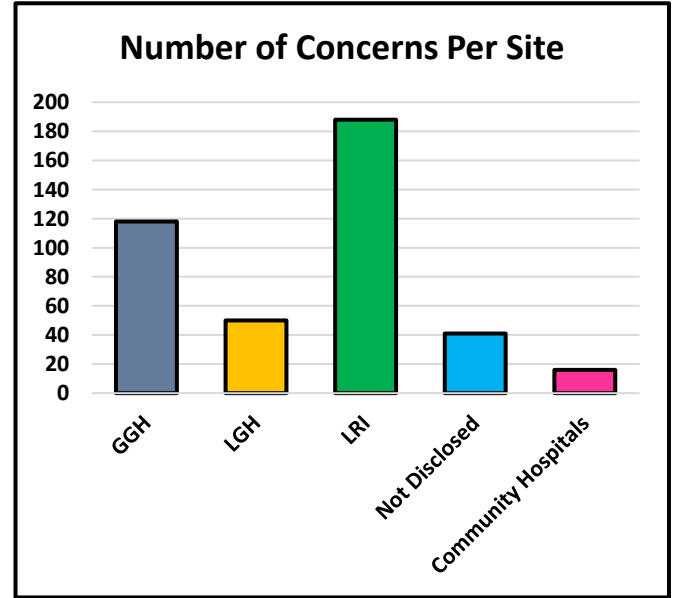
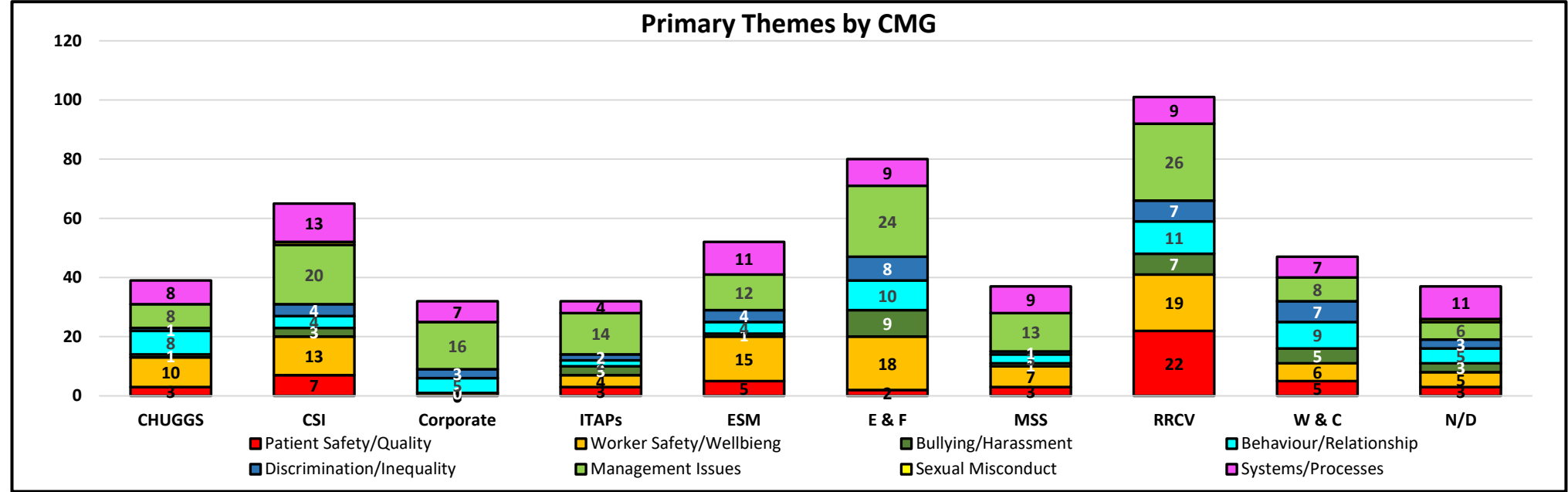
Outcomes Q4	
Chose not to pursue	6
No further contact	5

Reported Detriment Q4	
Detriment	2

Reason for contacting FTSU Guardian	
Impartial Support	43
Fear of Reprisal	28
Believe they will not be listened to	8
Have raised before but have not been listened to	37

Themes				
	Primary Only		All themes inc. primary	
	Quarter	Year	Quarter	Year
Patient safety/quality	13	39	15	49
Worker Safety or wellbeing	20	92	54	177
Bullying or harassment	8	24	14	42
Other inappropriate behaviour or attitudes				
Behaviour / relationship	11	42	22	94
Discrimination & inequality	7	32	13	49
Management issue	40	112	67	183
Sexual Misconduct	0	2	1	4
Additional Themes				
System and process	17	70	38	115
Other	0	0	0	1
Totals	116	413	224	714





Section 2 – Additional Data

Breakdown of themes by Quarter

	Q1 April – June 25	Q2 July 25 – September 25	Q3 October 25 – December 25	Q4 January – March 26
Patient Safety / Quality	7	7	12	13
Management Issue	19	22	32	40
System / Process	16	15	22	17
Bullying and Harassment	5	5	6	8
Discrimination / Inequality	9	7	9	7
Behavioural/Relationship	11	10	9	11
Other (Describe)	0	0	0	0
Worker Safety	27	25	21	20
Sexual Misconduct		0	1	0
Grand Total	94	91	112	116

Escalations, response times and case length annual data

1. **Escalation data:** Total number of escalations into the Trust was 269, 60% of these had a same day response rate.

2. Response Times:

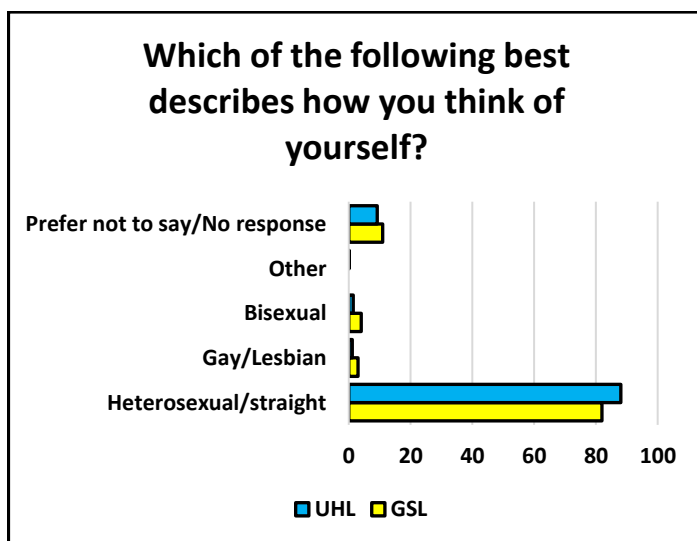
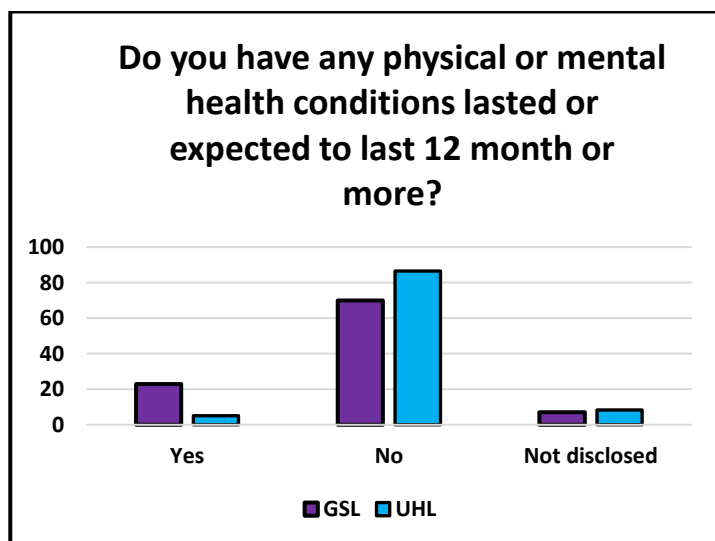
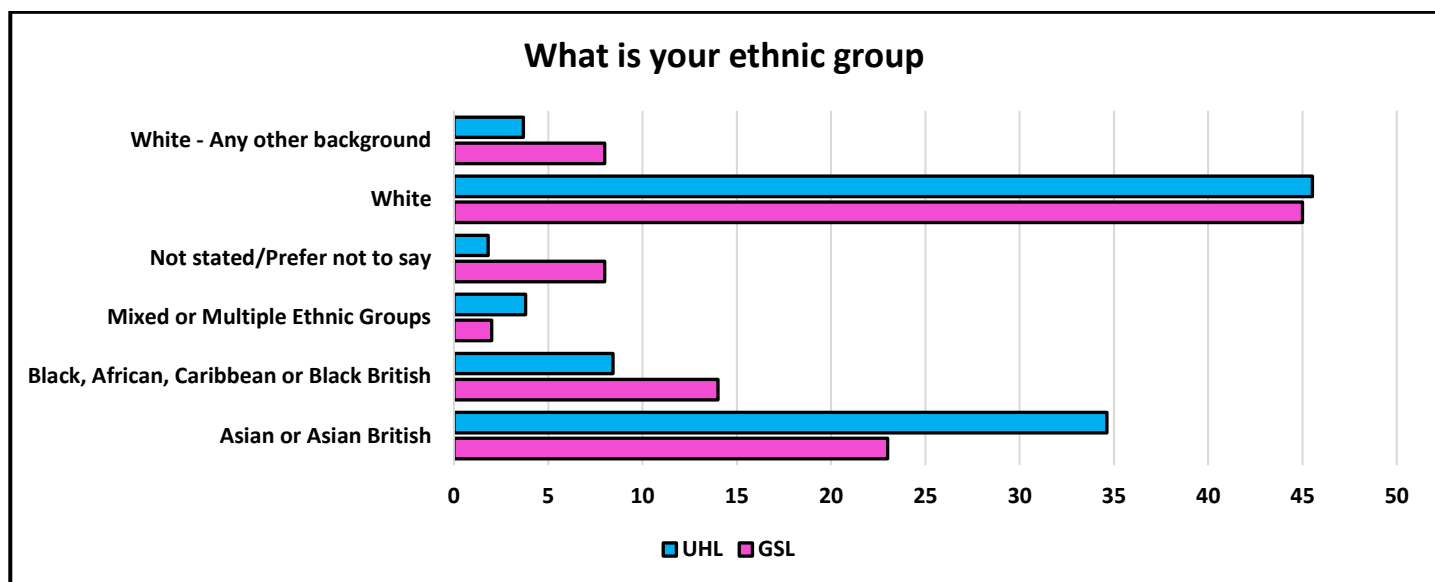
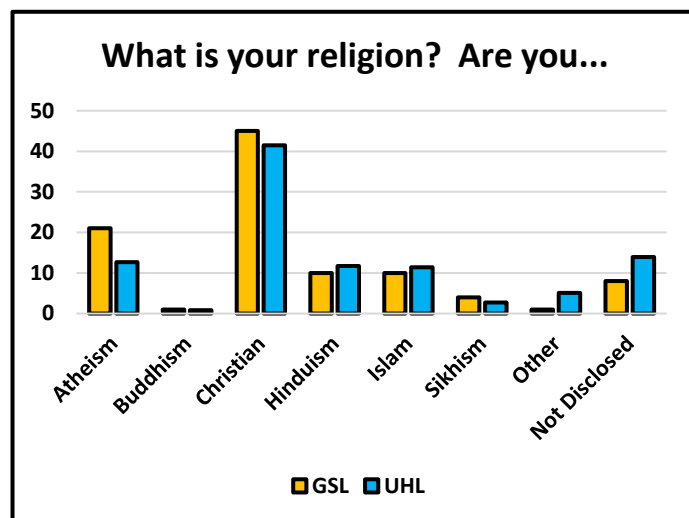
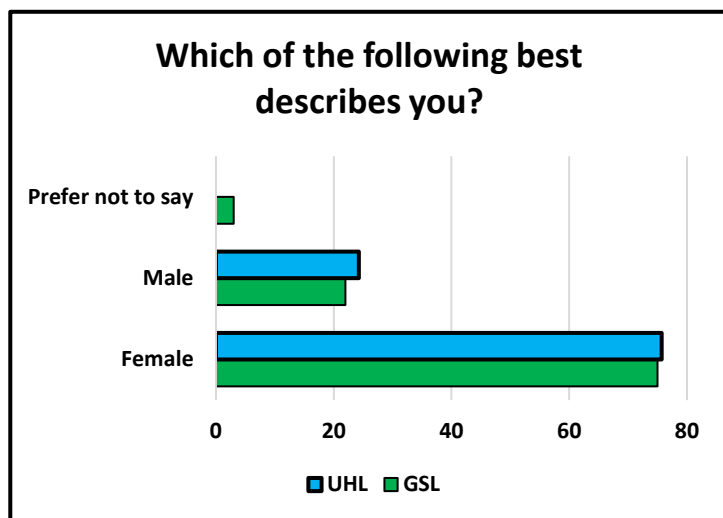
- **Red:** 100% response within the same day
- **Amber:** 88% responded within 48 hours.
- **Green:** 97% responded within 72 hours.

The longest response time was 14 days. The manager was on annual leave and the staff member wanted to wait for them to return.

3. **Longest cases:** The longest running cases are from November and December 2025. Both of these staff members have had ongoing emotional support.

Annual Demographics Data

105 staff members of the 396 closed cases completed the GSL feedback survey upon closing their concern. 73 of the 105 completed the diversity information.



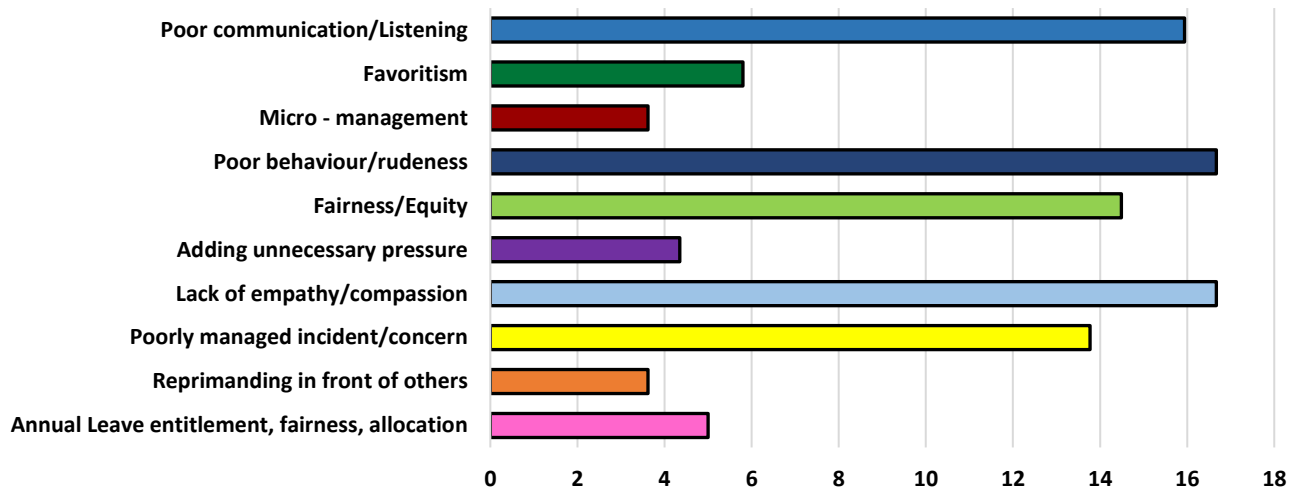
Section 3 - What is the data telling us?

- **Management issues** - is the leading theme for concerns raised by staff in Q4 and across the year. This has however reduced from 34% of the total in 2024/2025 to 27% of total concerns in 2025/2026.
- **Worker safety and wellbeing** – has consistently been in the top two themes across the year and comes a close second to management issues overall. This has increased from twenty-five concerns in 2024/2025 to 92 concerns raised in 2025/2026.
- **Systems and Processes** - has been consistent in the top three themes and is a similar number of concerns from last year.
- **Highest Reported Site** – Continues to be the LRI as the largest site in Q4 and annually. There has however been an increase in concerns from LGH potentially due to increased promotion.
- **Highest Reported CMG** - within Q4 the highest reported concerns were from E & F. RRCV has the highest number of concerns annually followed by E & F and CSI.
- **Staff Groups** - in Q4 the highest reporting group was Estates and Ancillary followed by Nursing and midwifery. The highest reporting group across the year was nursing and midwifery followed by Admin and Clerical then Dental and Medical. This has changed slightly since last year as previously the highest reporting group was Admin and clerical.
- **RED Concerns** - red concerns have reduced slightly in Q4. However, we have seen a 73% **decline** in red concerns since last year.
- **Detriment** – The reporting of this has remained exceptionally low with only 5 staff members reporting this across the year although this is still 2 more than was reported last year.
- **Reasons for contacting the FTSU Guardian** – In Q4 The highest reported reason is for impartial support at 37%. 32% of concerns raised were because of feeling they had not been listened to/taken seriously by managers.
- **Demographics** – Overall the demographics of the staff members completing the survey are in line with that of UHL. The biggest disparities are in the number of Asian/Asian British staff members reporting being lower than that at UHL and the number of Black, African, Caribbean or Black British being more than UHL. Those reporting they have a disability or long-term health condition is also a higher percentage than at UHL.

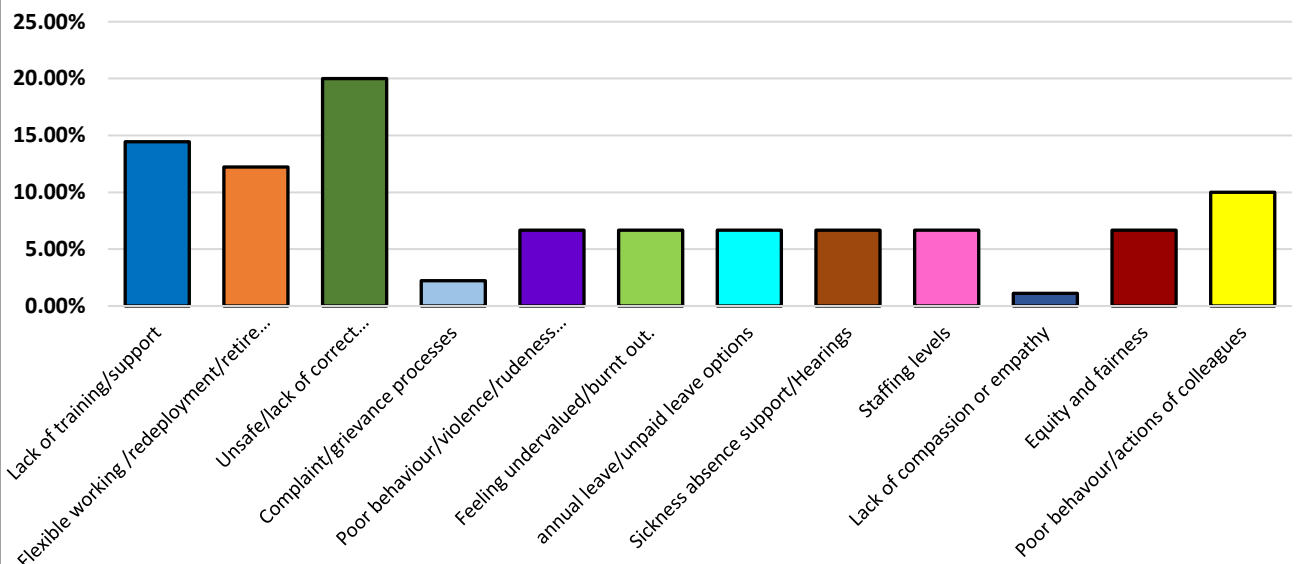
RED concerns breakdown annual:

Concern	Actions taken	Learning/outcome
Unsafe processes used	A senior manager visited the site immediately to ensure the correct processes were being followed and to reinforce expectations with the team	Use appropriate trolleys or tugs for transport
Potential fraudulent recording of overtime	Staff members logs checked and clear messaging given about recording overtime hours	All staff in the team to use electronic overtime system for recording. This will be monitored
Staff member alleges bullying and discrimination and managers not taking it seriously	Investigation ongoing	Still open
Lack of senior staff during emergencies leaving patients potentially vulnerable	Medical Director met with Senior Staff members	New system implemented to ensure appropriate staffing
Patient safety compromised due to incorrect scheduling of cover	Managers investigated. Scheduling analysed and appropriate cover put in place	Greater scrutiny of annual leave cover and staffing/skill levels
System for access to senior doctors in emergency cases not fit for purpose and putting patients at risk	Managers investigated	System updated to ensure appropriate cover is in place

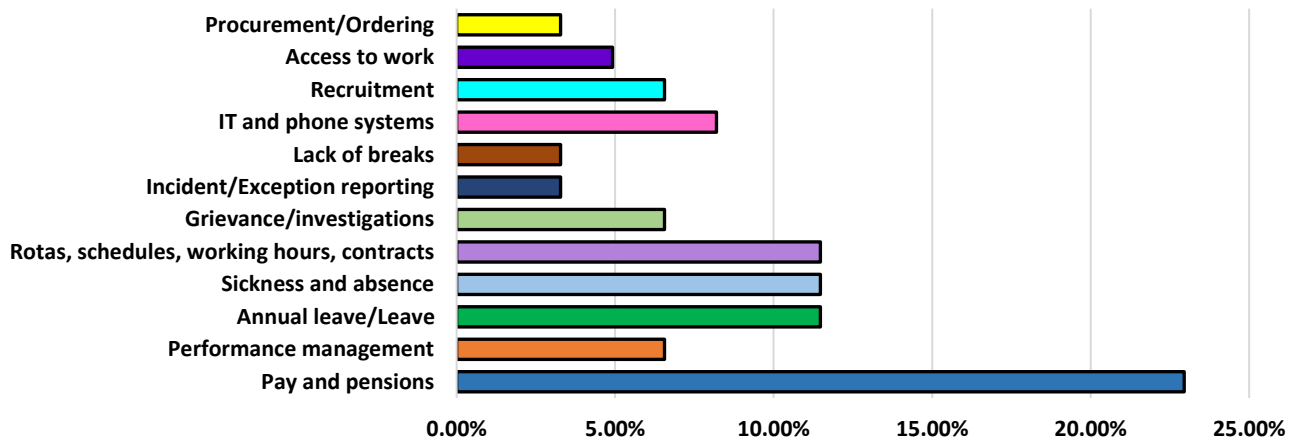
Percentage Breakdown of Management Issues



Percentage Breakdown of Worker Safety and Wellbeing



Percentage Breakdown of Systems and Processes



Annual Outcomes and learning:

- There has been a substantial reduction in red concerns from last year, which could be attributed to increase in staff trust that these incidents will be managed effectively internally, as the response to red concerns raised previously by the FTSU Guardians to UHL has been exceptional.
- Misconceptions around mandatory participatory hours for nursing staff rectified through targeted meetings with Confirmers (assessors) and Trust wide communication to nursing staff.
- Improved understanding of dyslexia and the Equality Act 2010. Management within pharmacy have put in place funding for disability support and training.
- Processes for access to work can be cumbersome, challenging, and lengthy for staff members and their managers. This process is moving towards being centralised, which should make the process quicker, easier, and smoother for all involved. IT are also prioritizing Access to Work referrals which will support this process.
- Over busy periods some staff are struggling with challenging rota's, low staff levels and shift patterns which is having an impact of their wellbeing and behaviours towards each other. Cases are managed case by case where this happens including giving emotional support, facilitating meetings with managers, escalating to senior managers where necessary.
- There has been an increase in staff members using the FTSU service stating they have long term illness or disability. Alongside this there has been an increase in activity in the Trust supporting staff and managers with reasonable adjustments, ensuring resources a shared with those that need it. We have been able to sign post managers and staff to this and have worked closely with the Differently Disabled Network to support staff.
- There has been an increase in staff reporting lack of support for flexible working. We have been able to support on a case-by-case basis, but this is something that may need oversight on a bigger scale.
- Management behaviours continue to be an issue with staff speaking to the FTSU Guardians. Lack of empathy/compassion, poor communication/listening and not managing concerns reported to them effectively are the highest reported issues. Roll out of management training is in the recommendations later in this report.
- Staff members at community hospitals and satellite sites would like to feel more included in UHL. They have appreciated the visits from FTSU Guardians, but all noted they would like to see more staff/teams visiting and to be part of well-being initiatives.
- Increased awareness of importance of inclusion for groups including Muslim Women within the uniform policy and how this can be effectively implemented without compromising infection prevention.
- Some staff members are struggling being able to find a private respectable space to pray. With 30 minutes for a break some are too far away from the prayer rooms. This needs to be considered by local managers in collaboration with staff members the EDI team and chaplaincy.

Section 4 - FTSU Guardian Activities in Q4

As well as promotions and taking regular concerns we also:

- Contribute to monthly meetings with Director of Corporate and Legal Affairs, Great Place to work group, EDI Steering Group, HR and People Services sharing information, Quarterly meetings with CEO, Chair and Head of Communications.
- Estates and Facilities wellbeing briefing sessions across all three main sites.
- Attend Bi-weekly in-person Corporate Inductions briefings for new starters as well as occasional virtual Induction events.
- Attend in-person monthly and weekly Corporate Inductions with HCSW and Resident Doctors Corporate induction.
- Provided evidence and supported with increased site visits which helped the Maternity Team to receive Bronze in the Anti-Racism Framework.
- LLR FTSU group meeting sharing best practice.

- Quarterly CMG Senior Management meetings to share themes across the CMG and added to our reporting to CMG's including job groups speaking up.
- Renal satellite and community hospital visits to sites, briefings and drop ins.
- Increased engagement and collaborative work with EDI and Differently Disabled Network Co-Chairs.
- Working group with members of the Executive and senior team analysing available information regarding discrimination.
- Support Managers and senior staff with how to move concerns forward, manage expectations and develop a more open culture.

Case Study

Theme: Discrimination/inequality, system and process

Concern: The uniform policy for clinical staff changed to ensure increased infection prevention. The staff member needed to cover their arms as part of their religion, but they were training in a clinical role that required bare arms below the elbow. They initially tried to roll their sleeves down when seeing male patients, but the staff member was later informed, they were in breach of the rules by their manager and taken off clinical duties. The manager did not collaborate with the staff member at this time to look at viable options. This impacted their training as the course they were completing was clinical, so this was taking the time they needed to be meeting competencies.

The staff member contacted the FTSU Guardian and explained that they had nearly handed in their notice as they felt they were not being supported.

FTSU actions: With the permission of the staff member the FTSU Guardian met with the leader of EDI to talk through the concern. They suggested speaking to the Executive responsible for Health Equality and Inclusion. The FTSU Guardian made contact and explained the situation the Executive.

Trust Actions: The Executive collaborated with colleagues to look at the new uniform policy going through governance to see where this case sat within it. The case went through the Health and Safety Committee to give reassurance and ensure a decision was made for this staff member.

Outcome: The staff member could wear healthcare grade long gloves when caring for male patients if they follow the infection prevention guidance on hand washing and PPE for different patients.

Feedback

- Speaking up has really empowered me. I feel a whole new person and ready to tackle any obstacles that come my way thanks to the support I have received.
- Prompt and empathic response. Supported to gain actions for wider problem.
- "I had a good experience with the Guardian service. They respected my confidentiality and listed all my concerns.
- The Guardian who dealt with mine and my team's concern, was very supportive, non-judgmental, and responsive throughout the entire process.
- The Guardian listened to my concern and discussed the options with me. She raised my concern through the appropriate channels and kept me fully updated of progress.
- As a member of NHS staff sometimes we do not know who to turn to if we have problems/issues. The service helps with this.
- Brilliant session, I felt listened to and my guardian understood my concerns and was able to come up with a viable solution on my next steps.

- It's great to know that there's someone that listens.
- I was unable to speak out, but the Guardian opened communication with the managers.
- The staff member was polite and very helpful and kept me informed of what was happening.
- The Guardian was informative in accessing support available at UHL that I was unaware of.
- This experience has made me comfortable enough to speak up again in the future and encourage my colleagues to also to when they are in an uncomfortable situation.
- I feel truly happy being able to speak with the Guardian. They made me feel supported and valued which reassures me that my voice matters.
- My problem has been handled by the Guardian very smoothly and professionally by maintaining my dignity.
- The Guardian has been great! very efficient and effective and always responded back to me efficiently allowing me to freely speak about what has gone on at any time!
- The guardians involved in my case were very prompt, gave timely updates about the progress of my case and achieved my desired outcome of the concern I raised.
- I would like to thank the Guardian for their help and professionalism. We didn't get the outcome we were after, but it was helpful that they were with us in our discussions.
- The Guardian has been kind and sensitive throughout, recognising that the concern I raised was valid and important. Made me feel heard and kept in touch throughout.
- Thank you! Your support has empowered me to speak up and helped bring about a much-improved atmosphere within our work environment.
- After a difficult time at work, I contact the Guardians. They were extremely empathetic, professional, friendly, knowledgeable & understanding at all times.

Recommendations

Management issues

- Roll out of management training for all managers and leaders with line management responsibility including civility, relationships, behaviours, managing conflict, change management. Made mandatory where multiple concerns are raised in a team or department.
- Formalised support for leaders and managers including coaching/mentoring for those new to role. This could be implemented as a pilot initially.
- Hold CMG SLT accountable for steps considered and taken because of FTSU concerns and all available speak up data provided. Including learning from concerns.

Discrimination and Inequality

- Ensure clear guidance for all staff members including managers about speaking own cultural language other than English whilst at work.
- Further and more directed training for all managers relating to EDI with a particular focus on inclusion and reasonable adjustments. Making all staff aware of the resources available to them.

Systems and Processes

- Clear, shared guidelines relating to fair and transparent recruitment and pay increases.
- Support for managers working with staff on long term sickness with the aim of getting them back into work.
- Future collaboration with the FTSU Guardians and the Health and wellbeing team to enable further intelligence sharing and more visibility and promotion across all areas of UHL.

Appendices

UHL Response to Recommendations

Management issues	What's already in place/planned	Covered in Year 2 People Strategy Delivery Plan
Roll out of management training for all managers and leaders with line management responsibility including civility, relationships, behaviours, managing conflict, change management. Made mandatory where multiple concerns are raised	All managers and leaders will be required to work to the new leaders and managers code, there is an underpinning Management and Leadership Development Framework to be launched imminently. The successful rollout of this will be embedded throughout the employee lifecycle i.e. recruitment, appraisal, learning and development offerings. The topics outlines within this recommendation will be incorporated into the 'Managers Essentials Training' series.	Yes
Formalised support for leaders and managers including coaching/mentoring for those new to role. This could be done as a pilot initially	Coaching and mentoring is currently available to all leaders. However this will be re-launched through the Leadership & Talent Academy.	Yes
Hold CMG SLT accountable for steps considered and taken as a result of FTSU concerns and all available speak up data provided. Including what has been learnt from concerns.	Raising concerns is a NOF metrics. Suggestion is, ensure through PRMs and Deep-dives through PCC sub-group 'A great place to work' captured FTSU themes and raising concerns confidence levels and actions. We would also recommend rollout of mandatory speak up and listen up training	Yes
<u>Discrimination and Inequality</u>	What's already in place/planned	Covered in Year 2 People Strategy Delivery Plan
Ensure clear guidance for all staff members including managers about speaking own cultural language other than English whilst at work.	Draft guidance awaiting approval through patient experience stakeholders, EDI Steering Group then to Joint Execs	No - separate
Further and more directed training for all managers relating to EDI with a particular focus on inclusion and reasonable adjustments. Making all staff aware of the resources available to them.	Managers guidance and clinics now available. Refreshed mandatory training will commence in line with the streamlining of mandatory training national programme of work.	No - separate

<u>Systems and Processes</u>	What's already in place/planned	Covered in Year 2 People Strategy Delivery Plan
Clear, shared guidelines relating to fair and transparent recruitment and pay increases	This guidance is already in place AfC T&Cs.	No - separate
Support for managers working with staff on long term sickness with the aim of getting them back into work.	Attendance management T&F Group	Yes
Future collaboration with the FTSU Guardians and the Health and wellbeing team to enable further intelligence sharing and more visibility and promotion across all areas of UHL	The holistic review meeting attended by OD, OHWB, FTSU and ER teams is in place, this forum should be utilised.	No - separate

The Guardian Service

Background to Freedom to Speak Up

Following the Francis Inquiry¹ 2013 and 2015, the NHS launched 'Freedom to Speak Up' (FTSU). The aim of this initiative was to foster an open and responsive environment and culture throughout the NHS enabling staff to feel confident to speak up when things go or may go wrong; a key element to ensure a safe and effective working environment.

The Guardian Service

The Guardian Service Limited (GSL) is an independent and confidential staff liaison service. It was established in 2013 by the National NHS Patient Champion in response to The Francis Report. The Guardian Service provides staff with an independent, confidential 24/7 service to raise concerns, worries, or risks in their workplace. It covers patient care and safety, whistleblowing, bullying, harassment, and work grievances. We work closely with the National Guardian Office (NGO) and attend the FTSU workshops, regional network meetings, and FTSU conferences. The Guardian Service is advertised throughout the Trust as an independent organisation. This encourages staff to speak up freely and without fear of reprisal. Freedom to Speak Up is part of the well led agenda of the CQC inspection regime. The Guardian Service supports the Trust's Board to promote and comply with the NGO national reporting requirements.

The Guardian Service Ltd (GSL) was implemented in UHL September 2023 and officially launched on 9th October 2023.

Communication and marketing have been achieved by meeting with senior staff members, joining team meetings, site visits, the Intranet and the distribution of flyers and posters across the organisation. All new staff will become aware of the Guardian Service when undertaking the organisational induction programme.

Access and Independence

Being available and responsive to staff are key factors in the operation of the service. Many staff members, when speaking to a Guardian, have emphasised that a deciding factor in their decision to speak up and contacting GSL was that the Guardians are not NHS employees and are external to the Trust.

Categorisation of Calls and Agreed Escalation Timescales

The following timescales have been agreed and form part of the Service Level Agreement.

Call Type	Description	Agreed Escalation Timescales
Red	Includes patient and staff safety, safeguarding, danger to an individual including self-harm.	Response required within 12 hours
Amber	Includes bullying, harassment, and staff safety.	Response required within 48 hours
Green	General grievances e.g. a change in work conditions.	Response required within 72 hours
White	No discernible risk to organisation.	No organisational response required

Open cases are continually monitored, and regular contact is maintained by the Guardian with members of staff who have raised a concern to establish where ongoing support continues to be required. This can be via follow up phone calls and/or face to face meetings with staff who are in a situation where they feel they cannot escalate an issue for fear of reprisal. Guardians will also maintain contact until the situation is resolved or the staff member is satisfied that no further action is required. Where there is a particular complex case, setbacks, or avoidable delays in the progress of cases that have been escalated, these would be raised with the organisational lead for the Guardian Service at regular monthly meetings.

Escalated cases are cases which are referred to an appropriate manager, at the request of the employee, to ensure that appropriate action can be taken. As not all employees want their manager to know they have contacted the GSL,

they either progress the matter themselves or take no further action. There are circumstances where cases are escalated later by the Guardian. A staff member may take time to consider options and decide a course of action that is right for them. A Guardian will keep a case open and continue to support staff in such cases. In a few situations contact with the Guardian is not maintained by the staff member.