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## Speaking up in Practice Environments Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy relates to your experiences on practice placements. Kent and Medway Medical School (KMMS) welcome speaking up and will listen. By speaking up about your experiences on placement you will be playing a vital role in helping to improve the services to all patients and the working environment for all staff.
- 1.2. The NHS People Promise commits to ensuring that “we each have a voice that counts, that we all feel safe and confident to speak up and take the time to really understand the hopes and fears that lie behind the words”
- 1.3. KMMS also know that neurodiverse students, students with disabilities, those from an ethnic minority background or the LGBTQ+ community do not always feel able to speak up. This policy is for all our students, and we want to hear your concerns.
- 1.4. This policy and associated procedure reflect the Freedom to Speak Up policy for the NHS as well as General Medical Council (GMC) guidance on *Raising and acting on concerns about patient safety*.

## 2. Aim

- 2.1. The aim of this Policy and accompanying procedure is to:
  - Ensure that students feel safe and confident to speak up.
  - To help to normalise speaking up for the benefit of patients and workers.
  - To ensure that all matters raised are captured and considered appropriately.
  - To provide opportunities for improvement that might not otherwise be known about.

## 3. What can I speak up about?

- 3.1 KMMS encourages you to speak up about anything that gets in the way of patient care or affects your working life as a student in practice. This could be something which does not feel right for you. For example (non-exhaustive list):
  - a. A breach of professional behaviours towards a patient, their family or carers, another member of staff or student, by a member of staff within the practice placement.

- b. Discriminatory or oppressive practice, unprofessional attitudes or behaviour towards a patient, their family or carers, another member of staff or student by a member of staff within the practice placement.
- c. Bullying or any form of harassment towards a patient, their family / carers, another member of staff or student by a member of staff within the practice placement.
- d. Nonadherence with Health and Safety guidelines that places patients, their family, carers, members of staff or students at risk.
- e. Issues to do with the health of a member of staff within the practice placement that may affect their ability to practise safely.

#### **4. Confidentiality**

- 4.1. The most important aspect of speaking up is the information that you can provide and not your identity.
- 4.2. You have a choice about how you speak up:
  - **Openly** – you are happy that the person you speak up to knows your identity and they can share this with anyone else in responding.
  - **Confidentially**- you are happy to reveal your identity to the person you choose to speak up to on condition that they will not share this without your consent.
  - **Anonymously** - you do not want to reveal your identity to anyone. This can make it difficult for others to ask you for further information about the matter and may make it more complicated to act to resolve the issue or indeed impossible to resolve. It also means that you might not be able to access any extra support you need and receive feedback on the outcome.

#### **5. Speaking up**

- 5.1. **If your concern poses an immediate risk to the patient or staff, raise this immediately verbally to the person 'in charge' at the time and follow it up by submitting a Notification Form via the KMMS website.**
- 5.2. You speaking up is extremely helpful and enables us to identify opportunities for learning and improvement. KMMS will not tolerate anyone being prevented or deterred from speaking up or being mistreated because they have spoken

up.

5.3. If you do not feel able to speak up to someone at KMMS or the organisation that you are placed in, you can speak to:

- The relevant professional body for matters around conduct of a member of staff
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) for quality and safety concerns about the services it regulates or
- NHS England (NHSE)

## **6. Aim for informal resolution through speaking up internally**

6.1. Most speaking up happens through conversations with supervisors where challenges are raised and resolved quickly. KMMS strives for a culture where it is normal everyday practice, and we encourage you to explore this option in your practice placement – it may be the easiest and simplest way to resolve matters.

6.2. Whilst it is preferable that concerns are raised at the time, it is recognised that students are evolving practitioners who may need support to reflect and consider a situation before challenging it, so they may seek out university support before approaching practice staff.

## **7. What happens next?**

7.1. If your concern has been resolved informally, it is still important that you complete a Notification form.

7.2. If you feel unable to raise it informally or it has not been acted upon you should submit a Notification form.

7.3. You will be always treated with respect and be thanked for speaking up. The issues that you have raised will be discussed with you as it is important to understand exactly what you are worried about.

7.4. Where an investigation is needed, we will tell you how long it is expected to take and will agree with you how to keep you up to date.

7.5. Wherever possible, the full investigation report will be shared with you (while respecting the confidentiality of others and recognising that some matters may

be strictly confidential, as such it may be that the outcome cannot be shared with you).

## **8. How we all learn from your speaking up**

- 8.1. KMMS wants speaking up to improve the services that are provided for patients and the environment that you work in as students and future practitioners. Where the investigation identifies improvements can be made, KMMS will support the organisation to ensure that necessary changes are made and are working effectively. Lessons will be shared across the organisation and more widely as appropriate.
- 8.2. An anonymised report detailing themes and trends will be presented to KMMS Placements Committee on a termly basis and at Operational Contract Quality Review Meetings on an annual basis.