

Evidence Protocol for Staff

This document describes the Inquiry's approach to obtaining evidence from current and former members of staff with experience of mental health inpatient care.

We understand that some staff will be concerned about speaking to the Inquiry and how their evidence will be used. This protocol together with the FAQs for staff aims to address those concerns. If after reading these documents, you still have questions or concerns please talk to a member of the Inquiry team who will be happy to discuss these with you.

The Inquiry wants staff to feel able to speak freely and in detail about their experiences and any concerns they have. We understand that staff may wish to do this without their employer, manager or colleagues being aware.

Any current or former member of staff can provide evidence **privately** directly to members of the Inquiry team. This means that no one else will be present during the evidence session. Sessions can take place in person or over video-link.

Staff can also complete a written evidence form and submit this directly to the Inquiry.

In addition, any current or former member of staff can request that the Inquiry agree treat their evidence as provided on an **anonymous** basis. This means that whilst the Inquiry will know your name, the Inquiry will not disclose any details which could identify you within our final report or to the wider public.

Hearing from staff will assist the Inquiry in understanding some of the challenges and issues faced by those working in mental health care. It will also allow the Inquiry to ensure that the final report and recommendations will help staff deliver safe care and treatment for patients.

The information and views which staff provide to the Inquiry will form part of our evidence base. It will assist us with our investigations and help us to draw conclusions and make recommendations. We may wish to ask other witnesses to comment upon some of the issues which you raise. We may also refer to evidence provided by staff within the final report.

However, where the Inquiry has agreed to treat any part of evidence provided by a member of staff anonymously, we will not disclose any details which could identify you without speaking to you first.

If any member of current or former staff has any specific concerns about anonymity or providing evidence to the Inquiry, please speak to the Inquiry team.

There are some limits to the Inquiry's ability to keep any evidence received as anonymous. In certain circumstances, the Inquiry may need to refer matters to a regulatory body (such as the GMC) or to the police. This may be where we hear evidence of professional misconduct, criminal activity or where there are serious safeguarding concerns. There may also be circumstances in which we are ordered

by a Court to disclose evidence which we have received as part of our investigations. Where practicable, the Inquiry will liaise with those concerned to seek their views as to the nature and extent of the information to be disclosed.

There also may be circumstances where we may wish to disclose some of the information which you have asked to keep anonymous in order to assist us in our investigations, in the final report or in making recommendations. In that situation, we will contact you to discuss how this may be achieved and listen to any concerns which you may have.

Further information can be found on our website within our Privacy Information Notice and our Safeguarding Policy.

The Inquiry recognises that some staff may prefer to provide their account to the Inquiry in a different way, or with additional support. The Inquiry is happy to discuss any potential measures that can be put in place. The Inquiry appreciates that some evidence may be distressing or difficult to give and will strive, at all times, to treat staff with dignity and respect.

This protocol may be updated from time-to-time, with the latest version appearing on the Inquiry's website. If you have any questions concerning this protocol, please contact a member of the Inquiry Team on 0207 972 3500 or by email contact@emhii.org.uk

September 2022