HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS FOR NEW INDEPENDENT NATIONAL WHISTLEBLOWING OFFICER ROLE

SUBMISSION FROM MiP, by Mercedes Broadbent and Claire Pullar

How will the order affect the whistleblowing process?

MiP believes the order will have a positive impact on the whistleblowing process. It is vital that the process for whistleblowing is seen to be independent, and this order is an important step forward to assure this. MiP carried out a survey of our members in Scotland, and found that 57% of our membership surveyed believed that the order would have a positive impact upon them in their role as NHS managers. However, we do believe more information about the process is necessary to properly assess whether or not the impact would be entirely positive—a member who completed our survey highlighted the need to know, for example, “how individual members of staff can access this person and maintain confidentiality”.

Should the ombudsman fulfil the role of Independent National Whistleblowing Officer?

It is crucial for the success of this process for the role to be filled by a genuinely independent person or persons. MiP may support the ombudsman fulfilling this role, but believes that more clarity is needed in order to understand how the process would work, and how true independence would be guaranteed. Concerns were raised by some of our members that “there needs to be an independent, transparent and effective system that will show real action being taken against individuals who show behaviour that is clearly unacceptable in a modern working environment.”

Does the order give the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer adequate powers?

MiP has no particular view as to whether the order provides the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer with adequate powers. Our understanding is that the order appears to provide the powers required, although this is difficult to judge without more detail about the processes involved.

Is there anything you would add, amend or remove from the order?

As above, we would like a great deal more clarity about how the Independent National Whistleblowing Officer would operate, and more detail about how the process would function.