

Investigation Report- 14/05/21

Nurses United (NU) have just completed our first investigation following complaints lodged using our [Community Guidelines](#) process. These guidelines outline our values and expected behaviours for NU and our friends and allies. It also details how feedback and complaints can be submitted and how we will respond.

This investigation concerned a number of separate complaints made regarding threatening and abusive behaviour by specific individuals who were members of NU and part of the leadership and administration team of a group closely linked with NU. It is our duty as a responsible, grassroots organisation to ensure that we act appropriately. We therefore took immediate steps to thoroughly investigate the complaints made. This included seeking clarification and further information from the individuals who submitted the complaints, and contacting those who were named in the complaints to ensure they were aware, could provide additional information and/or respond and were appropriately supported. The decision was also taken to temporarily suspend the named individuals from NU's Core Leadership Team (CLT). This was not a punitive measure or an indication of any decision. It was intended as a protective and preventive measure to minimise harm and ensure that the investigation findings are robust and unbiased.

We approached this investigation with no preconceptions or decisions. We have endeavoured to respect and protect the rights and privacy of all involved in a kind and fair way; whilst also meeting our obligations as a grassroots organisation to investigate accusations of this nature formally and thoroughly. The details of these complaints, the investigation and issues surrounding it have only been discussed with the very limited number of individuals who are involved in conducting the investigation and/or raised the initial complaints; all of whom have been reminded of the need for confidentiality. We have kept all correspondence in written form to ensure that everyone involved has a record for reference. This is to further ensure that we are being fair and transparent. This is in keeping with our Community Guidelines as well as being required of us by our members and granters, who expect us to use our limited resources in line with our values. Any information originating from sources outside NU is outside of our control.

As a result of this investigation, a large amount of information was received in a number of different forms. All information which appeared to be relevant and offered in good faith was included in the investigation. This evidenced conduct by the named individuals which contradicts our values and expected behaviours. It also reflected wider concerns with the specified group regarding the lack of an open and democratic structure which includes and empowers members. Those named in the complaints were given the right to reply to this evidence. However, no information or communication was received from the named individuals/group which challenged this conclusion. As a result, the investigation found that the behaviour and values demonstrated did not align with our Community Guidelines, which the individuals and group are included in both as part of NU and as an ally.

NU firmly believes in the importance of being able to make genuine mistakes, reflect, offer sincere apologies where appropriate and learn from them to improve and grow – as individuals and as organisations. Sadly, this investigation evidenced a long-standing pattern of targeted behaviour which is not limited to isolated incidents. There is also no evidence of reflection or acknowledgement to suggest that this behaviour will change in the future. It was therefore decided by those conducting the investigation that appropriate action would be to remove the named individuals from both the CLT and NU membership and politely and professionally end our relationship with the named group. This conclusion was subsequently presented to and approved by the current NU CLT.

As the named individuals are no longer part of the CLT or NU following their voluntary resignation when these complaints were initially received, no further action is needed on that point. Additionally, NU's relationship with the named group has already come to an end due to existing issues regarding them adopting a democratic structure to ensure that it is able to be accountable to itself, work well and ultimately win campaigns. There is therefore no additional action required.

This investigation has also raised important points regarding our ways of working, communication and related procedures. We are learning from this experience both as individuals and as an organisation. As we are entirely led by Nurses who conduct NU business on a volunteer basis on top of their full-time roles, we are very limited in our time and resources. However, as a result of this investigation we have taken steps to improve our processes and will continue to do so over the coming weeks and months as part of our ongoing commitment to reflection and improvement. This includes establishing a completely separate email for feedback and complaints which can only be accessed by the Convenor of NU, reviewing our processes for communicating with allied groups and reflecting on our own experiences, communication and behaviour throughout this process to ensure that we continue to maintain our key aims of being clear and kind.

NU exists to build power for Nurses to create the kind of change we and our patients deserve. NU was set up by Nurses with some experience of organising to see if we could do things differently and create a structure that could actually achieve the kinds of practical changes frontline Nurses want to see - like a restorative 15% pay rise, safe PPE and an NHS that opposes institutional racism. We have always done this in line with our values, as detailed within our Community Guidelines. We will continue to provide support to Nurses who are members of any group who continue to campaign within NU's Community Guidelines because our commitment is, and always has been, to support and educate all Nurses who want to organise, including ourselves.

This investigation has presented numerous challenges for us, both logistically and personally, but we are satisfied that we have conducted this investigation as thoroughly and fairly as we are able. We hope to now move forward and focus our time and energy on continuing to build power for a restorative 15% pay rise alongside our

other work to organise at the grassroots. So if you want to get involved, or stay involved, then as ever we are here as the place to make that happen.

NURSES UNITED