

## **Annie Norman: Turning Adversity into Strength**

### **Introduction**

Annie Norman was a nurse at NHS Highland when she raised concerns about understaffing and patient care in November 2010. Following this, her line manager expressed "no confidence in her practice," which led to Annie being re-deployed across different positions. Despite a formal investigation finding no evidence of bullying, the manager left after 12 months. After mediation failed, Annie was off sick and was re-deployed nine times over 6.5 years. With the support of her family, friends, and a nursing union representative, Annie eventually secured a permanent position in 2018. In 2021, she received compensation reflecting the severe harm caused to her health during this period.

### **The Disclosure**

Annie's story began when she called the ward where she worked to raise concerns about patient safety and welfare. Initially, this seemed like a routine action, but it soon escalated. Despite her best efforts, no one took action to resolve her concerns, and no apology was given by the perpetrator. This led to emotional exhaustion and a serious breakdown in mental health. From 2010 to 2016, Annie was re-deployed across various positions, suffering from increasing anxiety and stress. Annie's dedication to the truth and her belief that she had done nothing wrong kept her determined. She felt NHS Highland was acting incorrectly, which fueled her perseverance throughout the process. Despite the institutional failures, she fought tirelessly, seeking legal advice and medical support to cope with the emotional toll.

### **The New Role**

After years of re-deployment and legal battles, Annie was permanently re-deployed in 2018 to a position in the Infection Prevention and Control Nurse's team at NHS Highland. This new role provided her with the stability and professional support she had desperately needed. In 2021, after receiving compensation for the mental health damage caused by the years of mistreatment, Annie began using her story to help others. She now advocates for whistleblowers, sharing her experience and offering guidance on how to navigate similar challenges.

## **Factors That Helped**

### **Networking**

Throughout her journey, Annie leveraged her personal and professional networks. Additionally, Annie connected with other whistleblowers through the “Patients First” campaign, which provided invaluable emotional and practical support. This network also taught her how to effectively raise her concerns with her Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP), a move that proved instrumental in achieving closure for her case.

### **NewCulture**

When Annie found a new role in 2018, the workplace culture was vastly different. The compassionate and supportive managers she found in her new team gave her the opportunity to heal professionally and emotionally. While the details of her past as a whistleblower did not come up in her interviews, when her new colleagues learned of her history, they expressed admiration for her perseverance. Annie’s experience highlights how a healthy, supportive work culture can make a significant difference in a whistleblower’s journey.

### **The Ability to Move**

Annie’s ability to move between roles within NHS Highland played a key role in her eventual success. While the process of redeployment was exhausting, it allowed her to escape a toxic environment and find a healthier work setting. Her ability to adapt and persevere, supported by her union, eventually led to a permanent role in 2018 that allowed her to recover and rebuild her career.

### **Summary: Annie Today**

Annie’s journey as a whistleblower spans more than a decade of challenges, legal battles, and personal growth. Despite the setbacks, Annie has emerged stronger, with compassionate support from her family, colleagues, and community. She is now an advocate for other whistleblowers, speaking at workshops and events about how to raise concerns safely and how to deal with the personal and professional repercussions of blowing the whistle.

Annie’s determination, resilience, and the support networks she built have been key factors in her success. Her story serves as a reminder that, although the journey is long and difficult, justice and healing are possible.

## Further Reading

To learn more about Annie's story and her contributions to the **Patients First campaign**, visit:

<https://vimeo.com/1010966278>

<https://inwo.spsso.org.uk/news/former-whistleblower-shares-her-story-speak-week-2024>

<https://vimeo.com/1010980211>

[Former NHS whistleblower Annie Norman shares her story for Speak Up Week 2024 after Highland campaign achieved national improvements](#)

<https://www.nursingtimes.net/workforce/scotland-nurse-recounts-traumatic-whistleblowing-experience-02-10-2024/#:~:text=Annie%20Norman%2C%20a%20nurse%20of,and%20practice%20at%20her%20workplace>

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