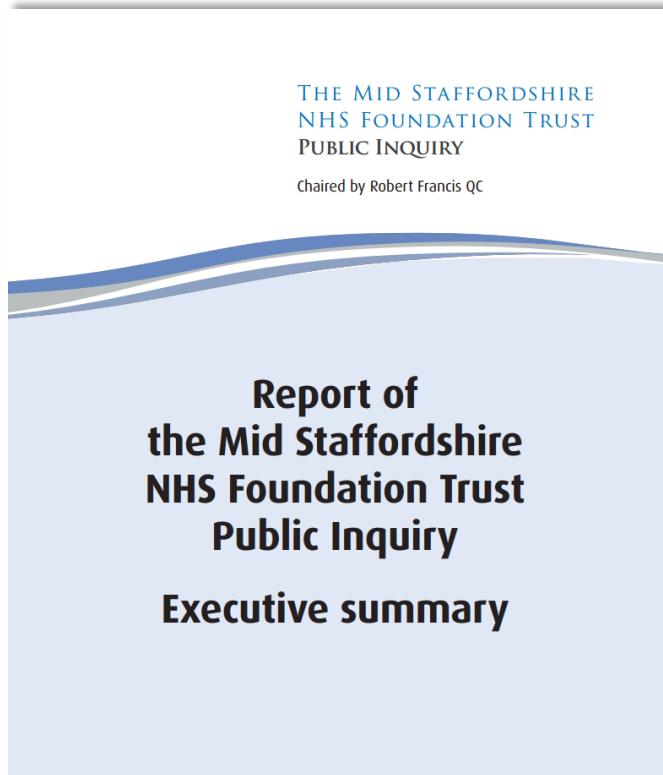


# KEEPING PEOPLE SAFER

## 3. How we can go silent





History tells us speaking up  
is difficult

‘hindsight’ 123 times

‘benefit of hindsight’ 378 times

[Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust  
Public Inquiry, 2013](#)

*Some had been reluctant to give evidence to the Inquiry, and we believe that this was as a result of their negative experience of raising concerns. They did not want to draw attention to themselves again.*

*Around a dozen healthcare professionals who worked at HEFT at the same time as Paterson told us that they knew at the time that others had raised concerns or complained about him. This appears to have caused some of them to feel they did not need to act on their own misgivings, as others already had done so.*

*This theme of people thinking it is someone else's responsibility to take action surfaced repeatedly in many areas of evidence to the Inquiry.*

House of Commons (2020). [Report of the Independent Inquiry into the issues raised by Paterson](#). (p.139)

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*Most of the time I'm telling myself to shut up because I worry that what I'm about to say is either already blindingly obvious or extremely stupid. (It REALLY IS as basic as not wanting to look a plonker.) What does the fear of looking a plonker mean for me? It means that I am left making a value judgement about whether or not to speak up.*

a foolish or inept person

Judging self by external standards

Putting the needs of others first

Inhibition of self expression

Splitting into a compliant public self and private emotional self

[Jack, D. \(1991\) \*Silencing the self. Women and depression\*. London, Harvard University Press.](#)

Acquiescent silence

- *Nothing I can do here*

Defensive silence

- *I'm scared*

Pro-social silence

- *I'm protecting others*



Evacuation – what and who is being removed from the public sphere?