A campaign group set up to restore the reputation of one nurse has now expanded its remit to support others affected by “bullying and abuse” in the NHS.

The Betrayed By Her Trust group was formed by the friends and family former of former mental health nurse Ingra Kirkland who claim her life was “ruined” by unfounded allegations and “bullying” that led to her leaving her job at Worcestershire Health and Social Care Trust.

Led by Ms Kirkland’s husband Nigel Gilbert, the group has been fighting to clear her name for more than two years.

Mr Gilbert told Nursing Times the campaigners had now decided to form a new organisation after hearing about other cases “of nurses ruined by the abuse and bullying of managers or other senior staff”.

Support group established to help NHS staff who are being “bullied and abused”

27 January, 2015 | By Jo Stephenson
The wider group – called Betrayed By Their Trust – is set to launch formally next month [February] but is already looking into five cases involving nursing staff who were employed in the Worcestershire area.

“We want to create an organisation to give mutual support to NHS staff and their families who are victims of abuse and bullying,” said Mr Gilbert.

“We also want to help them to achieve some kind of justice or recognition of what has been done to them.”

“We want to create an organisation to give mutual support to NHS staff and their families who are victims of abuse and bullying”

Nigel Gilbert

The group has been liaising with another campaigning organisation, the Campaign Against Unnecessary Suspensions and Exclusions in the NHS.

Mr Gilbert said such groups were needed to stand up for staff because “nobody else is doing this”. He claimed health unions were “not on top of this issue of bullying at all”, legal advice was often poor and NHS organisations were only interested in “maintaining the credibility of management”.

“We have found that, despite all the apparent interest in bullying, nobody genuinely looks at our complaints,” he said. “All we get are courteous letters informing us they are reassured all is well.”

In Ms Kirkland’s case, her supporters claim a minor issue around record-keeping anomalies was blown out of proportion turning “a molehill into a mountain”.

“All we get are courteous letters informing us they are reassured all is well”

Nigel Gilbert

Conservative MP for Wyre Forest Mark Garnier has said he would back a fresh, independent inquiry into the way the case was handled.

The call for an inquiry is also backed by two prospective parliamentary candidates due to contest the Wyre Forest seat.

One is former hospital physician and co-founder of the National Health Action Party Dr Richard Taylor, who is standing for the Independent Community and Health Concern party.

Meanwhile Labour candidate Matt Lamb told Nursing Times he would be happy to support an independent review because it appeared Ms Kirkland had been treated unfairly.

“It looks like this whole process has been flawed and a dedicated nurse has been treated extremely unfairly,” he said.

Previously Worcestershire Health and Social Care Trust has said it would not comment further on Ms Kirkland’s case because it was a “confidential HR matter”.

Previously Worcestershire Health and Social Care Trust has said it would not comment further on Ms Kirkland’s case because it was a "confidential HR matter".