



<b>Whistle Blowing</b>	
Reference: GN24	Effective date: 1 June 2012
Page no: 1 of 2	Approved: 6 June 2016
Last revision date: 1 June 2018	Revision date: June 2020

## Policy

### Aims

- ◆ To encourage staff and volunteers to feel confident in reporting serious concerns about any aspects of the organisation's work.
- ◆ To provide ways for staff and volunteers to report concerns.
- ◆ To ensure that staff and volunteers get a response to their concerns and that they know what to do if they are not satisfied with this.
- ◆ To reassure staff and volunteers that they will not be penalised for coming forward with their concerns.

### Definition

Whistle blowing is reporting a serious concern about another member of staff or volunteer to a more senior member of staff.

A serious concern might be;

- ◆ a criminal offence
- ◆ abuse or neglect of children
- ◆ bullying or victimisation of staff, volunteers or children
- ◆ financial malpractice
- ◆ a health and safety risk
- ◆ a failure to deliver appropriate standards of care

There may be other serious concerns, which do not fit into these categories.

## Procedure

Any staff member or volunteer can report a concern. Concerns can be reported verbally or in writing. In most circumstances this would be to the line manager. If the concern involves the line manager or it is felt they are unlikely to take any action, the member of staff should contact a more senior manager or the chair of the board of trustees.

All reported concerns will be investigated. Verbal concerns will be recorded in writing. The person to whom the concern has been reported to will assess what action needs to be taken. This could be an internal enquiry or more formal enquiry, for example involving Ofsted or the police. In some cases, the concern may be better addressed under another policy or procedure, such as Child Protection, Disciplinary, Grievance or Health and Safety.

The person reporting the concern will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible; normally within 2 weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the person will be informed in writing. Where a person is not satisfied with the outcome, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chief Executive.

## Confidentiality

Staff are encouraged not to report concerns anonymously as this makes them more difficult to investigate. Any concerns raised will be dealt with confidentially wherever this is possible. If other organisations need to be involved, it may not be possible to conceal the source of the information.

- ◆ The organisation will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect those who report a concern in good faith.
- ◆ No action will be taken against anyone who makes an allegation in good faith, reasonably believing it to be true, even if the allegation is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation.



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## Independent advice and further information

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees against detrimental treatment or dismissal as a result of any disclosure of normally confidential information in the interests of the public.

Staff who feel unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice can contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work (PCAW) on 020 7404 6609 or email [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk) their lawyers can give free confidential advice on how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

Ofsted has a whistle blowing hotline. You can call this on 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm) or email [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk).

Free information and advice can also be obtained from the Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). Telephone 08457 47 47 47.