

POLICY (Whistle blowing)

INTRODUCTION

is committed to the highest standards of quality, probity, openness and accountability. As part of that commitment, we encourage employees, volunteers or others with serious concerns about any part of our work to come forward and express those concerns. In many cases, concerns or complaints will be dealt with through normal procedures.

However, in some cases, it is recognised that employees and volunteers will need to come forward on a confidential basis. They should be able to do this without fear of reprisal or victimisation.

This policy is intended to underline our commitment to our employees and volunteers or for any who come forward to express their concerns.

CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION

We will consult and involve staff and volunteers as we develop our procedures and practices on confidential reporting.

Through induction and staff and volunteer development work, we will ensure that you know how to recognise the following problems and that you understand the effects they may have on the organisation, your work and the service you provide.

- Fraud, corruption and malpractice;
- Abuse or neglect of vulnerable people;
- Failure to deliver the proper standards of service;
- Damaging personal effects;
- Bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the work placed, including the office and client premises.

We will ensure that you know what is expected of you and what practices we regard as unacceptable. Check all the relevant policies carefully and discuss anything that seems unclear with your line manager. If you are not sure what to do in any given situation, ask before taking any action.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING

knows that it is never easy to report a concern, particularly one that may relate to fraud or corruption. We urge you to come forward at an early stage with any concerns that you may have. This may prevent problems becoming more serious than they need be.

If you prefer, we are happy for you to come forward with another colleague, a friend or any other advisor to report a concern.

will support concerned employees and volunteers and will protect them from reprisals or victimisation. If you come forward with a concern, you can be confident that this will not affect your career or

position in . This applies equally if you come forwarding good faith with a concern which later turns out not to be justified.

will do everything it can to respect your confidentiality if you have requested this.

If anyone tries to discourage you from coming forward to express a concern, we will treat this as a disciplinary offence. In the same way, we will deal severely with any who criticises or victimises you after a concern has been expressed.

When a problem is found, it will always be dealt with seriously. knows that it cannot expect you to practiced higher standards than those it applies. will always pursue fraud and serious abuse as vigorously as possible through disciplinary procedures, or if necessary, through the courts. Fraud will always be reported to the Police. hopes that you will feel confident in coming forwards and that it shares your sense of right and wrong and will act on what it is told.

WHOM TO CONTACT

In most cases, you will be able to raise concerns with your line manager. If, for some reasons, this is not possible, you should speak to the Director [or the Chair of the Management Committee]. All such contacts will be treated in confidence.

If you have concerns about your line manager, you should contact the Director of . You should talk to them directly and ask for a confidential meeting. You are entitled to bring someone with you to the meeting – a friend, colleague or another advisor. All such contact will be treated in confidence. If your line manager tries to victimise you because of your action, irrespective of whether your complaint was upheld, we will treat this as a disciplinary offence.

If our policy and procedures are working properly, you should not need to contact an external agency to express concerns. But there may be exceptional or urgent circumstances where it might be best to contact an external agency. If it is not possible to give precise examples, however, a relevant example might be:-

- If the problem involved a very senior staff of the organisation – contact the Chair of the Management Committee or another Management Committee Member;
- In the case of a criminal offence call the Police;
- In the case of any fraud, the organisation's external auditors, the Charity Commission or the Police (Fraud Squad).

We hope that none of these would ever prove necessary.

You can also approach Public Concern at Work for confidential and independent advice – the address is:-

Lincoln's Inn House
42 Kingsway
London WC2B 6EX

Tel: 020 7404 6609
Fax: 020 7404 6576
Email: whistle@pcaw.demon.co.uk

DEALING WITH CONCERNS

If you come to us with a concern, we will look into it carefully and thoroughly. We have to be fair to you but also to any others involved. If someone is potentially being accused of misconduct, we have to find out their side of the story as well. In our investigation will respect any concerns you have expressed about your own safety or career.

If you request it, we will try and let you know the result of our investigation and about any proposed action. However, in doing this, we have to respect the confidentiality of any other employees or volunteers who may also be involved.

If you have abused the confidential reporting process, for example, by maliciously raising unfounded allegations, we will treat this as a disciplinary matter. But no one comes forward in good faith has anything to fear.

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