

What is a Whistleblowing Policy?

Whistleblowing Policies communicate a staff member's right to make certain disclosures about wrongdoings within the organisation they work for without fear of reprisals. A Whistleblowing Policy explains which disclosures are protected and how an organisation's staff members can make a protected disclosure.

It is the duty of every member of staff and volunteer to speak up about genuine concerns in relation to criminal activity, breach of a legal obligation (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, and the cover up of any of these in the workplace. It applies whether or not the information is confidential.

When should I use a Whistleblowing Policy?

Use this Whistleblowing Policy:

- to let staff members know how to make any necessary whistleblowing disclosures
- to demonstrate a commitment to upholding staff members' rights in relation to whistleblowing
- if your organisation employs staff members in England, Wales or Scotland

[Charity/Organisation Name] Whistleblowing Policy

Date of this policy written	
Name of the person	
Next Review Date	

1. Policy Statement

[Charity/Organisation Name] is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency. We encourage all staff, volunteers, contractors, and others associated with the charity to report any concerns about unethical or illegal conduct, including wrongdoing or malpractice, within the organisation. This policy aims to provide a safe and confidential way for individuals to report concerns (whistleblowing) without fear of retaliation or victimisation.

[Organisation name] is committed to ensuring that any staff concerns of this nature will be taken seriously and investigated. A disclosure to [Voluntary Organisation] will be protected if the member of staff has an honest and reasonable suspicion that the

malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur. Staff and volunteers who raise concerns reasonably and responsibly will not be penalised in any way.

Who this policy is for?

This policy is for people employed by or volunteering with the [Voluntary Organisation]
For the purposes of this policy only, this is someone who is:

- Employed on a permanent or fixed term contract of employment.
- On secondment to [Name Of the organisation];
- On a temporary contract or employed through an agency to work for [Voluntary Organisation];
- An independent consultant for [Name Of the organisation]
- A volunteer with [Name of the organisation]
- Contractors and suppliers of services to [Name Of the organisation]

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage individuals to raise genuine concerns about misconduct, unethical behaviour, or illegal activities.
- Protect individuals who report concerns in good faith from retaliation, discrimination, or harassment.
- Provide a transparent and effective process for handling and investigating whistleblowing reports.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees, and contractors of [Charity/Organisation Name]. It covers concerns about:

- Criminal activity or breaches of the law.
- Fraud, corruption, or financial malpractice.
- Misuse of charity funds.
- Health and safety violations.
- Abuse, mistreatment, or harassment of any kind.
- Environmental harm or violations.

- Any other unethical or illegal behaviour that threatens the well-being of individuals or the reputation of the organisation.

4. How to Report a Concern

If you wish to raise a concern, you may do so through the following channels:

1. Internal Reporting:

- **Line Manager:** You can report your concern to your line manager or supervisor.
- **Designated Whistleblowing Officer:** If you prefer, you can contact the [Whistleblowing Officer] directly at [insert contact details].
- **HR Department:** Alternatively, you may report to the HR department via [HR contact details].

Any individual who has reasonable suspicions of malpractice should initially take their concerns to their line manager. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, they should approach the Chief Officer, or if their concern is related to the Chief Officer, they should contact a trustee or member of the management committee. It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure may be a daunting and difficult experience. An individual may choose to be accompanied or represented by their trade union representative or colleague at any stage of this procedure. All reported incidents will be investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only staff who need to know, being informed.

The Chief Officer, trustee or management committee member will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible, normally within two weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the member of staff will be informed in writing.

If an individual is not satisfied with the response received and any subsequent action taken, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chair of trustees/ management committee (or another appropriate trustee/committee member) who will arrange any further investigation as he/she thinks appropriate. The Chair will send a written response to the individual concerned.

2. External Reporting:

If you feel that the matter cannot be resolved internally, or if you do not feel

comfortable raising the issue within the organisation, you can contact external bodies such as:

- The Charity Commission for England and Wales (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission).
- The Independent Charity Regulator (if applicable).
- Action Fraud (www.actionfraud.police.uk) for reporting fraud or financial misconduct.

5. Confidentiality and Anonymity

- All reports will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The identity of the person making the report will be protected wherever possible, and information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- You may report a concern anonymously. However, providing your details may help the investigation and allow us to keep you informed of the progress. We encourage whistleblowers to provide their contact information to allow follow-up if necessary.

6. Protection from Retaliation

[Charity/Organisation Name] prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports a concern in good faith. Retaliation may include any form of discrimination, harassment, or adverse treatment following a report. Any individual found to be retaliating against a whistleblower will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

If you feel that you have been subjected to retaliation after raising a concern, you should report it immediately to your line manager, the HR department, or the designated whistleblowing officer.

7. Investigation Process

Once a concern is reported, the charity will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern.
- Conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, taking appropriate steps to protect confidentiality.
- Keep the whistleblower informed of the progress of the investigation, if they have provided contact details.
- Take appropriate action based on the findings of the investigation.

In cases where concerns relate to serious criminal activity, the relevant authorities (e.g., the police or regulatory bodies) may be notified.

8. False or Malicious Allegations

While we encourage all concerns to be raised in good faith, we will not tolerate false or malicious accusations. If an individual is found to have raised a concern that was knowingly false or malicious, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

9. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to ensure it remains effective and in compliance with current legislation and best practices.

10. Legal Framework

This policy is designed to comply with the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)**, which provides legal protection for individuals who report certain types of wrongdoing in the workplace, ensuring that they are protected from dismissal or detriment.

11. Contact Details

For any questions or to raise a concern, please contact:

- **Whistleblowing Officer:** [Name]
- **Email:** [Insert Email Address]
- **Phone Number:** [Insert Phone Number]
- **HR Department Contact:** [Insert Contact Information]
- **Charity Commission (if applicable):** [Insert Contact Information]

Signed:

[Name of Senior Manager/Trustee]

Position

Date

Independent advice and further reading

Further Information for charitable organisations can be found on the Charity Commission's website on: http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Our_regulatory_activity/Reporting_issues/Trustee_employee_and_volunteer_guidance_index.aspx

Employees who feel unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice can contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work (<http://www.pcaw.org.uk>) on 020 7404 6609 or email helpline@pcaw.co.uk.

Their lawyers can give free confidential advice on how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

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

You may feel that it is more appropriate to report a matter to another organisation. Other organisations concerned with standards in the voluntary sector include:

The Charity Commission - 0845 300 0218

Audit Commission for local authorities and the National Health Service in England and Wales – 0844 798 3131

Health & Safety Executive – contact on-line; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.html> or in emergency 0845 300 9923

NHS Fraud & Corruption Reporting Line – 0800 028 40 60

Public Concern at Work and ACAS can advise on the circumstances when it is more appropriate to contact an outside body.
