



Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum

Registered Charity No: 1141060

Whistle Blowing Policy

The Charity is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the Trustees and Volunteers.

This policy aims to help Trustees and Volunteers to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

It is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects employees who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:-

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a health and safety risk to an individual
- damage to the environment
- fraud or corruption
- unauthorised use of the organisations money
- or concealment of any of the above

It is not necessary for individuals who raise the concern to prove the wrongdoing that is alleged to have occurred or is likely to occur.

However, if an individual knowingly or maliciously makes an untrue allegation (e.g. in order to cause disruption within the organisation), the organisation will take appropriate action relating to their inappropriate conduct via the Charity's Code of Conduct Policy.

Individuals should note that they will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

Volunteers should make complaints or raise concerns through the Charity's Praise and Complaints Procedure.

How to raise a concern in the Charity

The officer designated to handle whistle blowing concerns is the Chairperson and shall be known as the Whistle Blowing Officer.

If the matter concerns the Whistle Blowing Officer, it should be raised with the Vice Chair or a Trustee.

Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns in writing, setting out the background and history of their concerns (giving names, dates and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for their concerns.

Disclosures made to a legal advisor in the course of obtaining legal advice will be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

If the individual reasonably believes that the matter relates wholly or mainly to the conduct of a person or body other than the Charity or any other matter for which a person or body other than the organisation has legal responsibility, the disclosure should be made to that other person or body.

Protecting the individual raising the concern

If an individual raises a concern which they believe to be true, the organisation will take appropriate action to protect the individual from any harassment, victimisation or bullying.

The matter will be treated confidentially if the individual requests it and their name or position will not be revealed without their permission unless the organisation has to do so by law.

If in other circumstances the concern cannot be resolved without revealing the individual's identity, the Whistle Blowing Officer will discuss with the individual whether and how to proceed.

Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective but the Whistle Blowing Officer will decide whether or not to consider the matter taking into account:-

- the seriousness of the matter
- evidence provided
- credibility of the concern
- potential harm to the Charity's reputation
- whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided

How the Charity will deal with the concern

How the concern will be dealt with, will depend on what it involves. It is likely that further enquiries and/or investigation will be necessary. The concern may be investigated by the Charity's Whistle Blowing Officer and Trustees, through the disciplinary process or it may be referred to other agencies such as Social Services/Police, an external auditor or an independent investigator.

It may be necessary for the individual to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings.

The organisation will give the individual feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed.

Volunteers will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and their confidentiality will continue to be protected.

Revised and agreed by Trustees' meeting

Dated 26 Sept 2017

Related Documents / Records

- All key Charity Policies