



## **WARRINGTON PARENTS AND CARERS WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **What is whistleblowing?**

- If you see or find out about something you think is wrong within the Organisation you should report it. You should go first to the Chair, Vice Chair of Development Officer. If you cannot or do not wish to do this for any reason you should follow this whistleblowing policy.
- Raising concerns about wrongdoing can be one of the most difficult and challenging things to do in a work environment. Under this policy you may come forward with legitimate concerns without fear of being blamed or suffering any disadvantage for doing so.

### **Protection from victimisation**

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998), an employee who reports a whistleblowing concern is legally protected from victimisation. Victimisation occurs where someone is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint or assisted someone else in making a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Even if your concern turns out to not be true, or if there is not enough evidence, you will not face any repercussions.

However, if you make a complaint maliciously and knowing that it is untrue, we may terminate your role or take legal action.

### **What types of concerns can be raised by whistleblowers?**

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 provides protection for workers who reasonably believe that they are acting in the public interest and where the disclosure falls into one of more of the following categories.
- A criminal offence that has, is being, or is likely to be committed.
- Unauthorised or inappropriate disclosure, misuse, or loss of confidential, personal and / or sensitive information
- A miscarriage of justice

- **A failure to comply with a legal obligation.**
  - Risk or damage to the environment
  - A danger to the health and safety of employees or others
  - Attempts to suppress or hide information relating to wrongdoing.
  - The concern can be about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now or that you believe is likely in the future.
  - As long as you hold a reasonable belief that the information is true then you will be covered by the protection set out in this policy regardless of whether you are mistaken, or the matter cannot be proved.
- Whistleblowing does not cover concerns where there is no public interest element such as a concern about your own employment or related matters. To raise a concern in relation to this please speak to the Chair, Vice Chair or Development Officer in the first instance.

### **Making your claim anonymously**

- It is possible for you to raise your claim anonymously if you wish to do so. However, this may mean that it is difficult to investigate fully if you haven't provided us with enough information.
- We assure you that we will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of staff and would encourage you to provide us with your name so we can fully investigate the matter. You may ask for confidentiality when doing so and we will respect this.
- If you ask for confidentiality, we will make every effort to protect your identity unless required to disclose it by law. If it becomes clear that we are unable to resolve the issue without revealing your identity we will discuss this with you, taking into account your views and our wider legal obligations before deciding whether or not to proceed with the investigation.

### **Support for whistleblowers**

Whistleblowing may be very difficult. We will take every step to ensure we protect and support whistleblowers internally. However, we recognise that people may feel more comfortable seeking external support in this situation.

The independent charity **Protect** on 0207 404 6609 can also provide support. Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about at work. They will also provide advice on the circumstances in which it may be appropriate for you to contact an outside body.

## **How to raise a concern internally**

### **Step 1**

Where possible you should raise any matter of concern, serious or otherwise with a member of the Management Team. This may be done either verbally or in writing.

### **Step 2**

If you feel unable, for whatever reason, to raise the matter with one of the Management Team you should approach any of the others.

### **Step 3**

If these steps have been followed and you still feel you have concerns, or that they have not been addressed, or that you cannot discuss the matter with any of the above then you should contact **Protect** (contact details are given below).

When raising your concern, it is helpful for you to provide an explanation with as much detail as possible including dates and times of incidents, any eyewitness details and any supporting documents that you have.

## **How to raise a concern externally**

Where attempts to raise matters internally have been unsuccessful or, exceptionally, you feel you cannot raise their concerns internally, you may consider raising the matter with the relevant regulatory authority. For more advice on this you can contact the charity **Protect** on 020 7404 6609/020 3117 2550. Email:[whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk)

## **What happens next**

The person who you raise the concern will listen to and consider your concern in full and determine whether any action is needed. This may mean conferring with the Chair, Vice Chair and Development Officer.

We will try to keep you informed about the actions that we are taking in relation to the concern including how we propose to deal with the matter, whether we need further assistance from you, any action that is taken and the outcome of the investigation. However, we may not be able to provide you with much detail where we have a duty

to keep the confidence of other people. You will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and your confidentiality will continue to be protected.