

“Whistle-blower” Policy

The objective of this policy is to describe the ways in which employees, volunteers and or trustees can disclose information that they believe is in the public interest without fear of victimisation or termination of their services as a result.

Introduction

Time 4 Children takes malpractice very seriously and believes that any individual who discovers wrongdoing within the organisation has a duty to report it to the appropriate person. Where appropriate we may choose or it may be appropriate to involve external authorities.

We are committed to ensuring that if you make a bona fide report under this policy you can do so in confidence, and will not be subjected to any detriment as a result. At the same time, you must reasonably believe that any disclosures you do make are substantially true and ensure that you make them in good faith to the appropriate person or body as detailed below.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- Provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied; and
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.

We will not, however, tolerate malicious, false disclosures or disclosures made for personal gain. These will be dealt with under the complaints procedure.

Scope of protection

Protection from detriment applies to disclosures made about the following types of malpractice;

- Criminal offences
- Non-compliance with a legal obligation
- Miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Sexual, physical or verbal abuse and other unethical conduct
- Deliberate suppression of information relating to any of the above

The protection applies either to acts which have already occurred, or to acts which you reasonably believe might occur in the future. It applies whether or not the information you are releasing is confidential and also extends to malpractice overseas.

All disclosures must be made in good faith and you must have a reasonable suspicion that the alleged malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur. In addition where the disclosure is to a regulator you must honestly and reasonably believe that the information and any allegation in it are substantially true.

Who to make a disclosure to

In the first instance we ask that you raise any concerns you have with the Practice Manager. If the Practice Manager is implicated in the disclosure you should raise the issue with Board of Trustees (you may also raise concerns with a legal adviser, in the course of seeking legal advice about the issue).

Handling of a disclosure

All disclosures made to the Practice Manager will be confidential. The identity of the “whistle-blower” will not be made known to anyone else within the Charity without that person’s prior permission.

All allegations should be escalated to the Board of Trustees within 24 hours. It is the Board of Trustees responsibility to ensure that the allegation is fully investigated and appropriate action is taken as soon as reasonably possible/practical. You will be kept advised of the progress of the investigation on a regular basis. If at any point you are dissatisfied with the progress of the investigation you should raise this with the Board of Trustees.

Your disclosure should be made in writing, clearly stating your concerns and the evidence you have in support. All conversations that take place in relation to the alleged malpractice will be held in confidence by all parties involved.

If you believe that the disclosure relates to any of the areas set out in “Scope of protection” above, and you disclose this information to the appropriate person under this procedure in good faith, no action will be taken against you for making the disclosure.

However, we will take action against any individual who is;

- Found to be victimising another employee, volunteer or trustee for using this procedure, or deterring any of the afore mentioned from reporting genuine concerns
- Found to be making a false disclosure or allegation maliciously, or where there were no reasonable grounds for believing that the information supplied was accurate