



New Mills & District Volunteer Centre

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Introduction

- a) All of us one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or dangers to clients, other volunteers and members of staff or harassment or misbehaviour at work, it can be difficult to know what to do.
- b) You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling it is none of your business or that it is only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, the Centre Manager or to the Organisation. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.
- c) The Volunteer Centre takes very seriously any form of malpractice and has introduced this procedure to enable you to raise your concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. We would rather that you raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof.
- d) If something is troubling you which you think we should know about or look into, please use this procedure. If you are aggrieved about your personal position, the Grievance Procedure, which is in the Volunteer Recruitment Pack, is available to you. However, this Whistleblowing Procedure is also available for concerns about your personal position where you are uneasy about using the Grievance Procedure, as well as where the interests of others or of the organisation itself is at risk.

If in doubt – raise it!

2. The Volunteer Centre's assurances to you

- a) *Your safety*
The Trustees of the Volunteers Centre are committed to this Policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this Policy, you will not be at risk of losing your post or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course we do not extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue.
- b) *Your confidence*
 - (i) The Volunteer Centre will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this Policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your

confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identify (for instance because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.

(ii) Remember that if you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter or protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, this Policy is not appropriate for concerns raised anonymously.

3. How will we handle the matter?

- a) Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact him/her and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it.
- b) When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Procedure, we will tell you.
- c) While the purpose of this Policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. However, we may not be able to tell you the precise action we have taken where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

4. How to raise a concern

- a) If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with the Centre Manager. This may be done orally or in writing.
- b) If you feel unable to raise the matter with the Centre Manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with the Company Secretary. Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence, so that they can make appropriate arrangements.
- c) If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact:
The Chair or the Vice Chair.

5. If you are dissatisfied

If you are unhappy with the response you get, remember you can request that the matter be brought to the attention of the full Board of Trustees. Whilst we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will try to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.