



EmpowerEd

Whistle Blowing Policy

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Whistle Blowing Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children

Introduction

Improving the way in which people and organisations safeguard and promote the welfare of children is crucial to improving outcomes for children and young people and key local organisations named under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, have a duty to demonstrate that they have effective arrangements in place within their organisation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) makes clear what arrangements must be in place within an organisation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Management Board must demonstrate that it has an effective whistleblowing process in place and that the workforce is aware of this process.

Policy Statement

EmpowerEd expects all staff and employees, including adults working with children and young people, to express any concerns that they may have with regards to the conduct of any individual(s). The term 'staff' will hereafter include all the wider workforce, as stated above. EmpowerEd is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability. All persons working for, or with this organisation, must feel safe and supported in order to express their concerns. This policy document is intended to encourage and enable our staff to raise their concerns and to do so without fear of victimisation or discrimination. It does not replace the Complaints Procedure or the Safeguarding including Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy

It is supplementary to the organisation's Whistle Blowing Policy in regards to other forms of malpractice covered under the 'Public Interest Disclosure Act' The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) protects the public interest by providing a remedy for individuals who suffer workplace reprisal for raising a genuine concern, whether it is a concern about child safeguarding and welfare systems, financial malpractice, danger, illegality, or other wrongdoing. The concern may relate to something that is happening or has happened in the past. The PIDA covers all workers, including temporary agency staff. It does not cover the self-employed or volunteers. The Act also provides protection should individuals have difficulty gaining a reference from an employer because they have raised a concern. It makes it clear that any clause in a contract that purports to gag an individual from raising a concern that would be protected under the Act is void.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage adults working for or within the organisation to feel confident in raising concerns;
- Provide a process by which concerns can be raised and dealt with;
- Receive feedback on the process (where appropriate); and
- Provide a means by which staff can receive support where concerns have been raised.

What does the safeguarding whistleblowing policy cover? This policy is designed to cover concerns that staff have about the conduct of individuals in a position of trust within the organisation which could be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of young people and where staff, for whatever reason, feel unable to raise them under the organisation's standard child protection procedures around dealing with such allegations. It would include issues about:

- Unprofessional behaviour
 - Bullying by staff
 - Any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect)
 - Name calling
 - Personal contact with children and young people which is contrary to the organisations policies and codes of conduct
 - Any form of racial abuse
 - Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
 - Knowledge about an individual's personal circumstances which may indicate they could be a risk to children or unsuitable to work with children
- Please be mindful that these are examples of concerns and are not exhaustive.

Safeguarding against harassment or victimisation

EmpowerEd is committed to professional standards and to supporting staff. It is recognised that the decision to report a concern is a difficult one to make. Harassment or victimisation will not be tolerated, and EmpowerEd will take appropriate action in order to protect the person raising the concern when they are acting in good faith.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence, however, there may be a need for the whistle blower to give evidence for example if they have witnessed a crime or regarding disciplinary procedures if this is the outcome.

Anonymous Allegations

Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy

This policy encourages staff to raise concerns to be identified in doing so as part of their professional role/responsibility. However, anonymous allegations will be investigated as thoroughly as possible.

False allegations

If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith, which is not confirmed by an investigation, no action will be taken. However, if a concern is raised maliciously, disciplinary action may be taken.

How to Raise A Concern

Staff should normally raise their concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) under the organisation's standard procedures for dealing with allegations. If the Designated Person is the subject of concern the Whistle Blowing Policy can be implemented. Under standard procedures, if there are concerns that an adult working with children may have abused a child or be unsuitable to work with children and young people, concerns will be passed to the Safeguarding Lead.

In certain circumstances, staff may feel they are unable to follow the organisation's standard procedures e.g. because they feel their position in the organisation would be in jeopardy, they would be subject to intimidation, or that the person of concern is the designated manager to whom they should report such matters and there is no one senior to refer to.

They should then follow the Whistle Blowing Policy by contacting a nominated person (the 'responsible person') within the organisation.

If staff are unable to raise their concerns with the DSL, they can contact an impartial advisor on:

0843 123 1233

The Policy may also be used in circumstances when the matter has been raised under appropriate organisation procedures for referring child protection concerns, but the referrer considers that the manager has not taken the concerns seriously or acted appropriately with relation to them.

In such circumstances, referrers are encouraged to contact the named responsible person for 'Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy blowing' for the organisation. When following the Whistle-blowing Policy, concerns may be shared verbally, but should also be recorded in writing.

How EmpowerEd will respond:

Any concern regarding child protection will be referred to external agencies for investigation (children's services, police). If the concern is not of this nature, there will be:

- Investigation by management
- Disciplinary process if appropriate

- Consideration of policies, processes and procedures if such issues arise from the investigation.

Within 10 working days of a concern being raised the referrer will receive a written response from the responsible person which will:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received;
- Supply information on relevant support mechanisms
- Advise whether further investigations will take place; or
- Advise that no further action has taken place and why.
- If it is felt that it would be unsafe for any reason to share concerns with the named person from your organisation the following are appropriate contacts with whom to discuss your concerns:

Public Concern at Work is a registered whistleblowing charity.

- Helpline: 020 7404 6609