



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Policy Statement (our objectives)

1.1 YCSW is committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards at all times. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential to prevent such situations occurring, or to address them when they do occur.

1.2 The aims of this policy are:

- a) To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate and that their confidentiality will be respected
- b) To provide staff with guidance on how to raise those concerns
- c) To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if their concerns are investigated and not upheld.

1.3 This policy does not form part of the employee contract of employment, and it may be amended at any time. YCSW may also vary any procedure as appropriate.

2 Who is covered by this policy?

2.1 This policy applies to all individuals working at all levels of the organisation, including trustees, all employees, casual staff, and volunteers (collectively known as staff for this policy).

3 What is Whistle Blowing?

3.1 Whistle blowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- a) Criminal Activity
- b) Miscarriages of justice
- c) Damage to health and safety
- d) Concerns regarding the abuse of a child/young person.
- e) Safeguarding and child protection concerns.
- f) Damage to the environment
- g) Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements
- h) Bribery
- i) Facilitating tax evasion
- j) Financial fraud or mismanagement
- k) Negligence
- l) Unauthorized disclosure or use of confidential information
- m) The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

3.2 A whistle blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concern related to suspected wrongdoing, or danger affecting any of our activities, that you think could be a matter of public interest (a whistle blowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

3.3 This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances that are unlikely to be in the public interest, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or Antiharassment and Bullying Procedure as appropriate.

4. Raising a whistle blowing concern

4.1 In many cases you will be able to raise this directly with your manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing. They may already be aware of your concern and can tell you what action is being taken, acknowledge your concern and be able to agree a way of resolving it or ensure that your concern is escalated quickly and effectively for further investigation.

4.2 Where the matter is not able to be resolved with your manager, or you feel your manager has not addressed your concern, or you feel you can't raise it with your manager for any reason, then raise your concern with their line manager, a senior manager, or a trustee.

4.3 A meeting will be arranged with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague, friend, or union representation with you. The person with you must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4.4 A written summary of your concern will be taken and provide you with a copy after the meeting. You will be given an indication of how the organisation plans to deal with the matter.

4.5 All whistle blowing concerns must be recorded on the whistle blowing log, this can be done anonymously by a senior manager and is a confidential password protected document accessed only by the senior management team. If you have had a whistle blowing concern raised to you and you are not a senior manager please ask the Business Manager to record it for you.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 YCSW believes that you will be able to voice whistle blowing concerns openly under this policy. If you want to raise your concerns confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity a secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

5.2 We discourage staff from making disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be difficult, or impossible, if we cannot obtain full information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible and have been made in good faith. Whistle blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to a senior manager and appropriate measures can be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), the independent whistle blowing charity who offer a confidential helpline. Their details are at the end of this policy.

6 External disclosures

6.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

6.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concern to an external body such as a regulator.

YCSW strongly urge you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone externally. The independent whistle blowing charity Protect operates a confidential helpline, there is also a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6.3 Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as customer, supplier, or service provider. The law allows you to raise a concern in good faith with a third party where you reasonable believe it relates mainly to their actions or something that is legally their responsibility, however we encourage you to report such concerns initially first to YCSW.

You should contact your manager for guidance.

7. Investigation and outcome

7.1 Once you have raised a concern, your manager (or the person to whom you have made the report) will decide which category the concern falls in to:

1. Already be aware of your concern and can tell you what action is being taken
2. Acknowledge your concern and find a way to resolve it
3. Ensure that your concern is escalated quickly and effectively for further investigation.

If your concern falls into category 1, your concern will be recorded, and the solution highlighted, and you will receive notification of this. However, if your concern falls into category 2 or 3 we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.

7.2 In some cases we may appoint an investigator, or a team of investigators, including staff with relevant experience of investigations or of the specialist subject matter. The investigators may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimize the risk of future wrongdoing.

7.3 We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and the likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigators may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimize the risk of future wrongdoing. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

7.4 If we conclude that a whistle blower has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, the whistle blower will be subject to disciplinary action.

8. If you are not satisfied

8.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking; we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

8.2 If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled you can raise it with the CEO or a Trustee. Alternatively, you may contact the independent whistle blowing charity Protect for further advice.

9. Protection and support for whistle blowers

9.1 It is understandable that whistle blowers are worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff that raise genuine concerns in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

9.2 Staff must not suffer any detrimental treatment because of raising a concern in good faith. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats, or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment you should inform your manager immediately. If the matter is not resolved, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

9.3 Staff must not threaten or retaliate against whistle blowers in any way. Anyone involved in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action

10. Responsibility for the success of this policy

10.1 The Trustees have overall responsibility for this policy and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

10.2 All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected wrongdoing.

10.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy if your concerns relate to a safeguarding or child protection.

11. Contacts

Protect – independent whistle blowing charity

Helpline 020 3117 2520

Or use their contact form available at <https://protectadvice.org.uk/contactprotectadvice-line/>

Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk

Contact the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(ACAS\)](#), or your trade union for more guidance.

If you decide to blow the whistle to a prescribed person rather than your employer, you must make sure that you have chosen the correct person or body for your issue. For example, if you are blowing the whistle on broadcasting malpractice you should contact the Office of Communications (Ofcom):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribedpeople-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-andbodies>

12. Monitoring and review of this policy

12.1 We will continue to review the effectiveness of this policy to ensure it is achieving its stated objectives as noted in the first paragraph.