

HINCKLEY HOMELESS GROUP

LAWRENCE HOUSE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Staff Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Workers who blow the whistle on wrongdoing at work are protected from victimisation and dismissal under law. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 has been successfully used on many occasions to protect whistleblowers from reprisals and also to secure compensation for those victimised for revealing serious wrongdoing.

The Act aims to promote greater openness in the workplace between employers and workers in dealing with wrongdoing that might arise. Under the Act, workers will be required to resolve these concerns first with their employer, but will be protected from victimisation if in the last resort they have to take their concerns to an outside body. The Act updates the Employment Rights Act 1996. Its content is designed to protect workers against loss or sacking for raising concerns in the public interest.

The Principles of the Act

Essentially, the Act is all about reassuring workers with genuine concerns over malpractice that it is safe to raise them. It protects individuals who make certain disclosures in the public interest and allow such individuals to bring action in respect of victimisation. In doing so it seeks to promote better accountability and more efficient regulatory oversight. It strives to signal a change in the culture but balances this by providing safeguards against troublemakers. It should be regarded as a governance tool that makes good business sense and not seen as another regulatory burden.

The Act enables workers to make wider disclosures if there is an honest and reasonable belief that concerns being raised are substantially true, reasonable and not for personal gain. However, this can only be done if these concerns have already been raised internally or with a prescribed regulator. But a concerned individual can by-pass this last condition if they reasonably believe they would be victimised or that a cover up might take place. In addition, an employee, volunteer or resident can go directly outside the group if they reasonably believe their concerns are exceptionally serious. This places responsibility upon the employer to ensure that robust internal arrangements to receive concerns are in place and that proper protection can be offered.

The Whistleblowing Policy

Hinckley Homeless Group are committed to high standards of quality, openness and accountability. This policy and its associated procedure enables staff, volunteers and residents of any of the group's projects to raise concerns about malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.

This Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the Group itself are at risk.

Staff and Volunteers are reminded that the operation of this Policy / Procedure does not remove their responsibility to ensure that Hinckley Homeless Group is not maliciously brought into public disrepute. Common and criminal law in relation to slander, defamation and libel will still apply, as do the Group's disciplinary procedures.

Whistleblowing responsibility.

The responsibility for the development, review, monitoring and approval of the Whistleblowing policy rests with the Management Committee.

Specifically, the Management Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Whistleblowing Policy is implemented and complied with at any facility under the charge of Hinckley Homeless Group.
- Ensuring that any whistleblowing information is reviewed as soon as possible, or at each Management Committee meeting and that any issues are resolved as appropriate.
- Ensuring an appropriate external body is available to receive any whistleblowing concerns that individuals may feel are not possible to raise internally.
- Advising the Project Manager in relation to resident whistleblowing issues brought to their attention and referring these to the Management Committee where appropriate.
- Ensuring that this policy is updated and amended as necessary and subject to a full review every 5 years.

The responsibility for implementation of the Whistleblowing Policy devolves to the Project Manager.

Specifically, the Project Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all employees understand and where appropriate are supervised and appraised in respect of their responsibilities for whistleblowing.
- Ensuring that all residents understand and are aware of the actions and responsibilities they have under the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Ensuring that records are kept of any whistleblowing in an appropriate secure and confidential manner.
- Sharing any whistleblowing issues as soon as possible with an appropriate member of the Management Committee, or externally if necessary.

The employees and volunteers are responsible for complying with the Whistleblowing Policy, specifically to:

- Complying with all premises rules, procedures and reasonable instructions relating to whistleblowing.
- Complying with statutory obligations and with the requirements of all relevant codes of practice.

Project Workers have the following Whistleblowing responsibilities:

- In the absence of the Project Manager, the Project Worker shall take responsibility for the day to day whistleblowing responsibilities of the Project Manager and record and report whistleblowing issues at the earliest practical opportunity.
- Maintain accurate and appropriate records and logs in relevant reporting media.

HINCKLEY HOMELESS GROUP

Whistleblowing Policy related documents.

Staff Whistleblowing Procedure

Staff Complaint / Grievance Procedure

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality Guidance

Residents' Rights, Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Resident Whistleblowing Procedure