



## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

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## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **Policy Statement**

Volunteer Centre Dorset (VCD) understand that the impact of whistleblowing can be highly significant for any business. We understand the importance of ensuring that the process is handled in a correct, timely and proper manner.

This policy demonstrates VCD's genuine desire to hear of any concerns and how seriously information presented to management will be taken. It also acknowledges its responsibility to report any serious incidents to the Charities Commission with assurances that they are being dealt with appropriately and advised to other authorities if appropriate.

### **1 What is a whistleblower?**

Whistleblowing is the term used when a worker passes on information concerning wrongdoing.

You are a whistleblower if you are a worker and you report certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you have seen at work - though not always.

The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, for example the general public.

As a whistleblower, you are protected by law - you shouldn't be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen soon.

## **2 Complaints that count as whistleblowing**

You are protected by law if you report any of the following:

- a criminal offence (for example, fraud)
- someone's health and safety are in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, for example, doesn't have the right insurance
- failure to comply with a legal obligation
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

## **3 Complaints that don't count as whistleblowing**

Personal grievances (for example, bullying, harassment, discrimination) aren't covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. Refer to VCD Grievance Policy for our policy on reporting personal grievances.

## **4 To whom do I report wrongdoing?**

You can tell your Line Manager, The Centre Manager (Marie Waterman), Deputy Manager (Craig Womble) or either of the nominated trustees if you wish to whistle blow.

If your disclosure contains information of a very serious nature the Board of Trustees will be informed

## **5 Making your claim anonymously or confidentially**

Volunteer Centre Dorset seeks to assure anyone making a disclosure that confidentiality and anonymity will be protected wherever reasonably practicable, and of its resolve to thoroughly investigate any claim made to the complete satisfaction of all parties.

You can report your concerns anonymously, but it may not be possible to take the claim further if you haven't provided all the information needed.

You can give your name but request confidentiality - the person or body you tell should make every effort to protect your identity. Refer to VCD Confidentiality Policy.

You should not contact the media, as this is not a 'prescribed person or body.' If you do, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **6 What VCD will do**

- We will listen to your concern and decide if any action is needed. You may be asked for further information.
- A serious complaint will be considered by a subcommittee of Trustees
- You must say straight away if you don't want anyone else to know it was you who raised the concern.
- A record will be made of the complaint and subsequent actions.
- To maintain confidentiality, this record will be held at the VCD office, in keeping with VCD's Confidentiality Policy. If the Complaint is against the Centre Manger, records will be held in a locked file at the office that is only accessible by the Chairman of the board and the Treasurer
- You will not have a say in how your concern is dealt with.
- We will keep you informed about the action we have taken, but we can't give you much detail if we must keep the confidence of other people.

## **7 If you are not satisfied with how your concerns have been handled**

If you believe that your concern wasn't taken seriously, or the wrongdoing is still going on, you may seek help from a 'prescribed person or body' (see APPENDIX for 'Whistleblowing for Employees' (UK Government website, which gives links to finding a 'prescribed person or body').

You should only approach an external 'prescribed person or body' if you believe your concern was not taken seriously or the wrongdoing is continuing.

## **8 If you are treated unfairly after whistleblowing**

You can take a case to an employment tribunal if you've been treated unfairly because you've blown the whistle.

You can get further information from the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\)](#), [Citizens' Advice](#) or your trade union.

If you reported your concern anonymously, you may find it harder to argue that your unfair treatment was as a result of your whistleblowing.

You must raise any claim of unfair dismissal within 3 months of your employment ending.

You must notify Acas if you want to take your case to an employment tribunal.

## **9 Training all staff**

VCD will endeavour to fully brief all staff (paid and voluntary) and trustees in relation to whistleblowing law and our policy.

Managers will be briefed on how to handle whistleblowing disclosures.

## **10 Trustee responsibilities**

Trustees must be fully informed of their responsibilities in cases of whistleblowing. They must consider cases of reported wrongdoing carefully and where it deemed to be of a serious nature, they must ensure it is reported to The Charity Commission.

## **11 Other VCD policies relevant to this document**

Confidentiality Policy; Grievance Policy

## **APPENDIX**

### **Legislation governing whistleblowing and employee rights**

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Employment Rights Act 1996

Employment Act 2008

**This policy was compiled using information from UK Government websites:**

Whistleblowing for Employees (UK Government)

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Whistleblowing Guidance for Employers and Code of Practice

Department of Business, Innovation and Skills March 2015 (UK Government)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-ofpractice.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415175/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-ofpractice.pdf)

### **Useful contacts**

**Acas** (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) Helpline

number is **0300 123 1100**.

**Whistleblowing for Employees** (UK Government)

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

**The Charity Commission Whistleblowing ‘Hotline’**

08000 557214.

This is a pilot scheme to make it easier for charity workers and volunteers to draw serious concerns about their charity to our attention, particularly where the charity’s trustees and senior management team aren’t addressing them. The initial Pilot scheme will run from June 2019 for 6 months.