**WORK PLACE CHAPLAINCY SCOTLAND**

**Listening & caring - in confidence**

**WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY**

**Introduction**

WPCS are committed to the highest possible standards of openness and accountability and we encourage staff, volunteers and others working with us to raise any concerns about any aspect of our work. In some instances, concerns may need to be expressed on a confidential basis.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. This procedure encourages staff to raise serious concerns, without fear of reprisal or victimisation rather than over-looking a problem or raising the matter outside. It applies to all staff and volunteers.

It is recognised that whistle blowing may engender feelings of disloyalty to colleagues or that staff may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in the continuation of behaviour that is causing concern.

**Don’t think, “what if I’m wrong?” instead think, “what if I’m right?”**

**Other Complaints Procedures**

This procedure is separate from the WPCS Complaints Procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. Child Protection issues should be reported according to the specific guidelines laid out the WPCS Safeguarding Policy.

Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice under this procedure will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect an individual.

**Behaviour that should cause concern**

* Conduct which is, has been or is likely to be an offence or breach of law
* Conduct that has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, as the result of which WPCS fails to comply with a legal obligation; for example, unauthorised use of funds, possible fraud and corruption, verbal, sexual or physical abuse, or other unethical conduct or discrimination of any kind
* Past, current or likely health and safety risks, including risks to the public, other employees or volunteers
* Past, current or likely damage to the environment.

**Reasons for whistle-blowing**

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour

* To prevent the problem worsening or widening
* To protect or reduce risks to others
* To avoid bringing WPCS into disrepute
* To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

**How to raise a concern**

* You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can with your Regional Organiser; the earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
* Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
* If your concern is about your Regional Organiser approach the Chief Executive Officer; if your concern is about the CEO, contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
* Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don’t let matters rest.
* Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, and giving names, dates and places where you can.
* A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

**What happens next**

* You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
* WPCS has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
* No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
* Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

**Confidentiality**

All concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if this is your wish. However, in certain cases, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality if you are required to come forward as a witness.

**Anonymous Allegations**

Whenever possible you should put your name to your allegation as concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful that those that are attributed to a named individual.

However, anonymous allegations will be considered and investigated at the Chief Executive Officer’s discretion. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

* the seriousness of the issues raised
* the credibility of the concern; and
* the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

**Self-Reporting**

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their Regional Organiser so that professional and personal support can be offered. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of the individual, colleagues or clients.