

Whistleblowing

1 Definition

- 1.1 Making a disclosure in the public interest is commonly known as 'Whistleblowing'. It is when a 'worker' suspects wrongdoing at work and "blows the whistle". A 'worker' could be an employee, volunteer, intern, temporary member of staff or agency worker.
- 1.2 To be covered by whistleblowing law, a worker who makes a disclosure must reasonably believe two things. The first is that they are acting "in the public interest"; this means, in particular, that personal grievances and complaints are not usually covered by whistleblowing law. The second is that a worker must reasonably believe the disclosure shows past, present or likely future wrongdoing falling into one of more of the following 6 categories:
 - Criminal offences (this may include for example types of financial impropriety such as fraud or money laundering);
 - Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law;
 - Miscarriages of justice;
 - Endangering of someone's health and safety;
 - Damage to the environment;
 - Covering up wrongdoing in the above categories.

2 How to 'blow the whistle'

- 2.1 If a worker suspects wrongdoing (or anticipates that wrongdoing is going to occur) they are required to report the matter to the Chairman or other Director as appropriate. This can be in writing or orally.
- 2.2 The Chairman (or other Director as appropriate) will then decide how to investigate and proceed.
- 2.3 Any worker who 'blows the whistle' will be protected from reprisal, bullying, victimisation, disciplinary action, dismissal or detrimental treatment - provided that they "reasonably believe" that what they are reporting is true. However, where disclosure made under this policy contains accusations which are found to be malicious or vexatious, the Healthwatch Worcestershire Disciplinary Procedure may be invoked.
- 2.4 Any employee found to be victimising another employee for making a disclosure or deterring any employee from making such disclosure may be subject to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

3. Audit and Review

- 3.1 A review of this policy will take place annually unless legal, contractual, specific business requirements, operational changes or events necessitate an earlier review.
- 3.2 This policy will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment under the Public Sector Equality Duty Act 2010.