

First Steps (Bath)

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

This policy is in place to protect employees and to secure positive working environments. First Steps (Bath) is committed to the highest possible openness, probity, and accountability standards. In line with that commitment, we expect employees and others we work with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the organisation's work to voice those concerns. First Steps (Bath) believes that Whistleblowing is an important aspect of safeguarding where, staff, volunteers and students are encouraged to share genuine concerns about organisational failure. The compliments and complaints policy is available for reporting lower-lever matters. The behaviour may not be child abuse (follow the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedure) but maybe a **persistent failure to follow policy and procedure or uphold legal frameworks**.

What is Whistle Blowing?

Whistleblowing encourages and enables employees to raise serious concerns within the organisation rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. It is very different from a complaint or a grievance. The term whistleblowing generally applies when you are acting as a witness to misconduct that you have seen and that threatens other people or children.

Who Does the Policy Apply To?

The policy applies to all employees, (including those designated as casual hours, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers, students or work experience), and those contractors working for the organisation on the premises, for example, agency staff, builders, and drivers. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the organisation.

Policy Aims

- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have disclosed in good faith.

What type of concerns are covered?

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- Disclosure related to miscarriages of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of public funds possible fraud and corruption
- Other unethical conduct

How to raise your concern

As a first step, you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate line manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that a member of the senior management team is involved you should approach a Trustee with specific responsibility for the area your concern lies within, (see 1d Our Trustees) for example if it were a financial issue, you would alert the Trustee with responsibility for Finance. If you believe that the issue is entrenched within the organisation or are unable to raise concerns with First Steps then you can seek independent advice by calling:

Public Concern At Work
 Website: www.pcaw.co.uk
 Helpline: 02074046609
 Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Or

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Website: www.bathnes.gov.uk

Telephone: 01225 396810

Or

NSPCC whistleblowing advice line. Staff can call 08000280285 – 08.00 to 20.00, Monday to Friday and 09.00 to 18.00 at weekends. The email address is: help@ncpcc.org.uk.

Your concerns will be recorded and investigated and resulting actions will be explained to you within an appropriate time scale.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may elevate your concerns directly to Ofsted Tel: 0300 123 1231, e-mail whistleblowing @ofsted.gov.uk.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you, however, to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that you:

- Must disclose the information in good faith
- Must believe it to be substantially true
- Must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- Must not seek any personal gain.

Links to other policies

- Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Procedure
- Staff Employment and Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure

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