



Whistleblowing policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

At Wendover Youth Centre (WYC), we believe that speaking up about any concern you have at work is really important and employees or volunteers are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong.

This policy explains more about what whistleblowing is, as well as how to do it at Wendover Youth Centre.

2. ACCESSIBILITY

If any aspect of this policy or procedure causes you difficulty on account of any disability that you may have, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should raise this with the Office Manager (admin@wendoveryouth.co.uk) who will make appropriate arrangements.

3. SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

This policy sets out the procedure for Whistleblowing and applies to all employees, workers, volunteers and trainees (collectively referred to as “workers” in the remainder of this policy).

This policy does not apply to external individuals who receive services from WYC. Where there are concerns or complaints from external users, these will be managed and supported via the Complaints Policy.

This policy is not contractual, it does not form part of employees’ terms and conditions of employment.

WYC reserves the right to amend this Policy and any accompanying documentation from time to time.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. Whistleblower

You are a whistleblower if you are a worker (see Scope and Eligibility) 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, or young people using WYC.

As a whistleblower you're protected by law - you should not 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 in the near future.

4.2. Whistleblowing Complaints

Examples of what could be considered a whistleblowing complaint are (this is not exhaustive):

- A criminal offence
- Someone's health and safety is in danger
- Risk or actual damage to the environment
- A miscarriage of justice
- The company is breaking the law
- You believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

Personal grievances (for example bullying, harassment or discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. If you have a concern or complaint to raise which is a personal grievance. This can be done via the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

4.3. Your Legal Rights

This policy has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, when those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions and in the public interest.

The Act makes it unlawful for the WYC to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimized on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the Act.

Rarely, a case might arise where it is the worker that has participated in the action causing concern. In such a case it is in the worker's interest to self-disclose as soon as possible. The WYC cannot promise not to act against such a worker, but the fact that they came forward may be taken into account.

5. MAIN PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURE

5.1. Reporting a Concern

5.1.1. *Who To Tell*

You can tell us as your employer, and in the first instance you should report your concerns with your line manager. If you are not comfortable talking to your line manager then please report your concern to the Chair of the Board.

There are other options if you do not want to report your concern to us as your employer, for example you can get legal advice from a lawyer or tell a prescribed person or body.

To see a list of prescribed bodies or people see **Further Information** or look them up on the government website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>

If you are unsure who to contact, the independent charity Protect can advise you. They offer a free and confidential helpline on 020 3117 2520.

5.1.2. *What information to provide*

You may raise your concern by telephone, in person or in writing. The earlier you express your concern, the easier it is to take action. You will need to provide the following information:

- The nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true
- The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates)
- Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your suspicion, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that you have a genuine concern relating to suspected wrongdoing or malpractice and there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

5.2. Anonymity and confidentiality

You can report your concerns anonymously, but this may limit our ability to take the claim further if you have not provided all the information we need.

You can give your name, but request confidentiality and we will make every effort to protect your identity. Reports will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Under no circumstances can any individual working with Wendover Youth Centre Ltd., keep confidential any information that raises concerns about the safety and welfare of a young person.

Please be aware that, as per the government website (<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/who-to-tell-what-to-expect>), if you report your concern to the media, in most cases you'll lose your whistleblowing law rights.

5.3. Responding to concerns

WYC will respond to your concerns as quickly as possible.

In order to be fair to all workers, including those who may be wrongly or mistakenly accused, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

The investigation may need to be carried out under terms of strict confidentiality, i.e. by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so. In certain cases, however, such as allegations of ill treatment of others, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of others is paramount in all cases.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may:

- Be investigated by management
- Be referred to the police
- Be referred to an external auditor
- Be referred and put through established child protection/abuse procedures

Within a reasonable timeframe of a concern being raised, the person investigating your concern will write to you:

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how Wendover Youth Centre proposes to deal with the matter
- Supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms
- Telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.
- The amount of contact between you and the officers considering the issues will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of your information. It is likely that you will be interviewed to ensure that your disclosure is fully understood.

Any meeting can be arranged away from the workplace and if you wish, you can be accompanied by a companion.

WYC will do what it can to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are asked to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, we will arrange for you to receive appropriate advice and support.

Unless we are prohibited by legal reasons or confidentiality then you will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

5.4. Support Available

Throughout this process:

- You will be given full support from senior management and the Board of Trustees
- Your concerns will be taken seriously, and
- WYC will do all it reasonably can to help you throughout the investigation

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

6.1 Prescribed bodies for reporting concerns

Children's Commissioner for England

Contact them about matters relating to the rights, welfare and interests of children in England.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Contact them about matters relating to child welfare and protection.

NSPCC
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London
EC2A 3NH
Tel: 020 7825 2505

Mon-Fri (incl. bank holidays) 9am to 5pm

Weekends 9am to 6pm

Fax: 020 7825 2525

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The Charity Commission for England and Wales

Contact them about the proper administration of charities in England and Wales and of funds given or held for charitable purposes in England and Wales.

Email: whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk