

Wigan & Leigh **Young Carers**

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WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES: Karen Aspinall

ADOPTED ON: 21st May 2019

REVIEW DATE: May 2020

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Wigan & Leigh Young Carers whistleblowing policy is to deter any malpractice within the organisation.

The Whistleblowing Policy is for Trustees, Employees and Volunteers

The Policy

Wigan & Leigh Young Carers is committed to developing a safe and open culture. Employees and volunteers with any concerns about unlawful or inappropriate conduct, financial malpractice or practices, and the cover up of any of these in the workplace or when undertaking home/communal visits whose disclosure is in the public interest, will be protected from adverse treatment following such disclosure. It applies whether or not the information is confidential.

Wigan & Leigh Young Carers is committed to ensuring that all disclosures will be taken seriously and investigated. Staff/volunteers will be protected if they have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur. Those who raise concerns reasonably and responsibly will not be penalised in any way.

Wigan & Leigh Young Carers, in compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, UN Secretary General's Bulletin 2002/13 and Keeping Children Safe Child Protection Standards, wants to ensure that any concerns about malpractice within the organisation are raised internally.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides protection for employees who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in good faith by an employee who reasonably suspects:

- A criminal offence
- Examples might be serious negligence which endangers others, child abuse, and the abuse of other vulnerable people, theft or fraud including making false representations
- A miscarriage of justice
- An act creating risk to health and safety
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach or failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirement
- Bribery
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- A concealment of any of the above is being or is likely to be committed

'Whistleblowing' is the colloquial term used to describe when:

Someone directly employed by an organisation, or someone providing a service for the organisation, reports concerns where:

- There is harm, or the risk of harm, to people, or
- Someone's health and safety is in danger or
- There is damage to the environment or
- The organisation is not obeying the law or
- A wrong doing is being covered up or
- There is possible criminal activity

And

- The management have not dealt with those concerns by using the organisation's own policy, or
- Where the worker does not feel confident that the management will deal with those concerns properly and contacts a 'prescribed body', such as a regulator instead.

Any individual who has reasonable suspicions of malpractice should initially take their concerns to the Project Manager. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, they should approach the Whistleblowing trustee June Ackers any member of the Board of Trustees. June can be contacted on 07847 202859.

Employees can whistle blow directly to the Charity Commission by e mail to :
whistleblowing@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern may be a daunting and difficult experience. An individual may choose to be accompanied at any stage of the procedure.

All disclosures will be investigated and will be dealt with in confidence, with only those who need to know being informed.

The Board of Trustees will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible, normally within two weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, they will be informed in writing.

The Project Manager is responsible for;

- Ensuring all staff are aware of this policy and procedure and their responsibilities
- Investigating issues raised promptly and thoroughly
- Fostering an open culture within their teams
- Ensuring any whistleblower is not subject to detriment
- Escalating issues and engaging the support of the Safeguarding Trustee where required

Independent Advice and External Contracts

- Independent advice at any stage of the proceedings can be obtained from your trade union and/or the independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609. This charity offers a confidential service. The helpline is not part of Wigan & Leigh Young Carer's reporting channels but a facility through which staff can obtain genuine independent and practical advice from experienced lawyers on the matter they intend to raise. Independent advice can also be obtained from trade unions.
- The lawyers of Public Concern at Work will also be able to advise whether reporting the matter to outside bodies such as the police or regulatory authorities is an appropriate route to take.
- Appropriate regulatory authorities include: The Charity Commission & The Health and Safety Executive
- The person raising the concern should indicate whether they want the matter to be treated in confidence so that appropriate arrangements can be put into place. A trade union, professional association representative or another member of the workforce can be present when a concern is raised.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually. Significant changes will be reported to the Board of Trustees.