



Whistleblowing Policy V4

Version Control						
Version	Date	Content	Manager Approved	Board Approved	Review Date	Owner
V3	Aug 2024	General review and update Added volunteers to this policy	G Phillips	M Howlett	Aug 2025	GP
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Introduction

Cheshire Young Carers is committed to conducting its affairs lawfully and takes any allegation of malpractice, criminal behavior, corruption or other wrongdoing very seriously. Occasionally an employee or volunteer may believe that malpractice is happening, has happened or is likely to happen. The purpose of this policy is to encourage employees/volunteers to raise their concerns within Cheshire Young Carers, in order that they may be properly addressed.

Any employee/volunteer who reports a wrongdoing will be treated fairly and sensitively. There may be occasions when an employee/volunteer may be mistaken in their allegation, but they will have nothing to be concerned about provided they acted honestly, responsibly and with good faith.

All employees are covered by this policy (including, for this purpose, volunteers, agency workers and contractors).

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide 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 has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- concealment of any of the above;

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for the employee to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient.

It is important that any employee/volunteer who raises a concern makes themselves known, since it will usually be necessary to obtain more precise information regarding the issue. Generally, anonymous allegations will not be acted upon. However, Cheshire Young Carers recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. Cheshire Young Carers will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect an employee/volunteer who raises a concern in good faith.

This does not mean that if an employee is already the subject of disciplinary or redundancy procedures, that those procedures will be automatically halted as a result of the whistleblowing.



Confidentiality

Cheshire Young Carers will do its best to protect the employee's identity when they raise a concern and do not want their name to be disclosed. It will be appreciated, however, that investigation of the allegation may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the employee may be required as part of the evidence.

Untrue Allegations

If the employee/volunteer makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that employee. If, however, the employee/volunteer makes allegations that are malicious or simply to cause anger, irritation or distress, disciplinary action may be taken.

Procedure

In the first instance any concerns should be raised with the employee's/volunteer line manager, if they are not the subject of the disclosure, in which case the next level of management should be approached. This depends, however, upon the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in the malpractice. For example, if it is believed that senior management is involved, the employee should approach the Managing Director or Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Concerns are better raised in writing and should contain the background and history of the concern, names of those involved, dates and places if possible, and the reason why the employee is particularly concerned about the situation. If the employee/volunteer does not feel able to put their concern in writing, they can telephone or meet the appropriate manager.

How Cheshire Young Carers will respond

The action taken by Cheshire Young Carers will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may be investigated and could potentially be referred to the police.

Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations which fall under the scope of specific procedures will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

The amount of contact between Cheshire Young Carers and the employee/volunteer will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the employee.



Cheshire Young Carers will take steps to minimise any difficulties which the employee /volunteer may experience as a result of raising a concern. For example, if the employee is required to give evidence in disciplinary proceedings, Cheshire Young Carers will advise them about the procedure.

Cheshire Young Carers recognises that employees/volunteers need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus the employee/volunteer will receive information about outcomes of any investigations, though any feedback may be affected by legal or other constraints.

This policy is intended to provide employees/volunteers with an avenue to raise concerns. If employees are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may raise the issue with the next level of management, including the CEO or the Board of Trustees, where no other level of management exists.

If the employee/volunteer making the protected disclosure still reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, they may report the matter to the proper authority.