

Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose and Scope:

This policy is to encourage and enable volunteers, employees and stakeholders to raise concerns about unethical, illegal or improper conduct within Challenge Wales, without fear of reprisal. It demonstrates our commitment to accountability, transparency and maintaining high ethical standards in our operations. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trustees and anyone associated with the charity. It covers concerns relating to fraud, misconduct, health and safety risks, environmental damage or breaches of law and organisational policies.

Our Commitment:

Whistleblowing can be described as raising a concern or making sure that if you see something wrong in the workplace, you are able to raise this within the organisation, to a regulator, or wider.

At Challenge Wales, we are committed to ensuring that our work is of the highest quality, and expect all volunteers and employees to maintain the same standards in everything they do. Any form of misconduct or misbehaviour is considered to be a serious case, and the required measures will be taken to rectify the misconduct.

Individuals working and/or volunteering for Challenge Wales are therefore strongly encouraged to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others in the charity, or the way in which the charity is run.

- Matters raised should be investigated thoroughly and dealt with promptly, without unreasonable delays and in a consistent manner.
- Confidentiality must be maintained by all parties, at all times throughout this procedure.
- If the employee/volunteer requests that their identity remains confidential, this will be respected wherever possible. However in some circumstances, confidentiality may compromise inquiries and if this is considered to be the case, the employee/volunteer will be told the procedure will have to continue without retaining their anonymity.
- The outcome of the investigation should be reported back to the employee/volunteer who raised the issue.
- No employee/volunteer will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure – victimising an employee/volunteer for raising a qualified disclosure under the Whistleblowing Policy is a disciplinary offence.
- Making a false whistleblowing allegation is a disciplinary offence.



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What is the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)?

PIDA provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called qualifying disclosures. The protection applies to all employees and volunteers.

As the name implies, PIDA is there to protect disclosures about activity which is against the public interest. For example, if you suspect someone is committing fraud (such as falsifying expense claims) or corruption (such as manipulating a contractual process for personal gain), or that health and safety standards prescribed by law are not being observed, these would be qualifying disclosures. This is because these activities are illegal, and therefore against the public interest.

What is a qualifying disclosure?

A disclosure that qualifies for protection is when, in the reasonable belief of the worker making it, it tends to show that one or more of the following has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur:

- the improper use of charitable funds
- a criminal offence
- failure to comply with a legal obligation (for instance, compliance with the Data Protection Act (mishandling/misuse of personal data relating to staff, customers, suppliers, providers etc.)
- the endangering of an individual's health and safety
- poor quality of care, abuse or neglect
- damage to the environment
- deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above
- improper or unethical conduct

This list is not exhaustive.

You have the right to be able to report any personal matter of conscience or concern you encounter in the workplace. You also have a specific right to legal protection if you expose activities that you believe to be illegal or against the public interest.

Alternatively, concerns can be raised with the Charity Commission:
www.charitycommission.gov.uk



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Reg Charity No 1111859

CWP 20

Registered address;
Crown House, Windsor Road, Penarth.
Vale of Glamorgan.
CF64 1JG

VAT No GB 930532352

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What support is available when a concern is raised?

Employees/volunteers may have the help of a colleague or a trade union representative at all stages of the procedure. They may also be accompanied by such an individual at any interviews which are required.

How do I raise a concern?

A concern can be raised through an Employee's Line Manager, Staff Skipper or Volunteer Manager. If it is felt this isn't the appropriate person then the concern can be raised through the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

When raising a concern, an employee or volunteer should try to provide the following information:

- The background history of the concern.
- Any relevant dates.
- Any evidence or grounds for suspicion behind the concern.

This information should demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for concern. Proof is not required; just a reasonable, honest belief that wrongdoing has or is likely to occur.

How will the concern be handled?

The person in receipt of the concern (i.e. line manager or senior manager) may instigate an investigation. This will be conducted sensitively and as quickly as possible. They may arrange a meeting to discuss the case and the employee/volunteer will be contacted to confirm who will be the case contact. The employee/volunteer has the right to be accompanied to a meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

The employee/volunteer will be kept up to date with the progress on the case when appropriate and informed when the matter is concluded. They will be advised as to the outcome if it is appropriate to do so.

According to the severity of the misconduct will determine if it is Misconduct or Gross Misconduct and other issues not previously identified may also be considered. The level of the misconduct will result in a level of action e.g. whether a warning is given to whether the person responsible shall be dismissed.

Anyone raising a concern through the whistleblowing procedure is expected to continue their normal duties throughout the investigation unless this is deemed inappropriate.

If the raiser of the concern is not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation, they can raise their concern to a higher level as indicated above.



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Independent advice concerning a serious malpractice within a charity can be obtained at any stage from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity on 0800 055 7214 or online at www.protect-advice.org.uk. Their lawyers can give free confidential advice and they can advise on the circumstances when it may be appropriate to contact an outside body e.g. on what types of wrongdoing you can report, your legal rights, next steps if you decide to report something. You can also get advice from Citizens Advice.

Signed:

Vicky Williams.

H Phillips

Vicky Williams, Manager
17.8.2023

Helen Phillips, Chair of Trustees
17.8.2023

Revision Log

Revision #	Date	Explanation of amendment	Who by
0	17.8.23	Document Completion	Vicky Williams – BDM Signed off: Helen Phillips



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