



## Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure

### 1. Definition of Whistleblowing

- 1.1 Whistleblowing is when someone reports wrongdoing that is in the public interest. This is usually something they've seen at work but not always. The wrongdoing might have happened in the past, be happening now, or be something the whistleblower is concerned may happen in the near future (Gov.uk, 2018).

### 2. Complaints and Whistleblowing

- 2.1 If you are worried that Heads Up or another organisation is not responding to or sharing child protection information appropriately, it's vital that you share your concerns to keep children safe.
- 2.2 Legislation across the UK ensures that you shouldn't be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle' (Gov.uk, 2018).
- 2.3 In **England, Scotland and Wales**, whistleblowers are protected by law under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

### 3. Complaints that count as Whistleblowing

- 3.1 You're protected by law if you report any of the following:
- a criminal offence, for example fraud
  - 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, for example does not have the right insurance
  - you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

### 4. Complaints that do not count as Whistleblowing

- 4.1 Personal grievances (for example bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. Report these under your Heads Up's grievance policy.

## **5. How to raise a concern – general**

- 5.1 Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing. A concern raised in writing should:
- set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible
  - give the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.
- 5.2 The earlier a concern is raised the easier it is to take action. Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for your concern. A trade union or professional association may raise a matter on your behalf.
- 5.3 If you intend to make a whistleblowing complaint you are encouraged to include your name. If you specifically request for your name not be released during the examination of your complaint, all efforts will be made for this information to remain confidential. However, if you are required to participate in the process as a witness, it may not be possible for your name to be withheld.
- 5.4 In the event of anonymous allegations being received, Heads Up will determine whether or not it is possible and appropriate for the allegations to be examined. This will be determined on a case by case basis with reference to the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources.

## **6. Step One – Raising a Concern**

- 6.1 Whenever possible you should raise your concern with your immediate line manager or his/her manager/CEO who can, if needed, seek guidance. If this is not appropriate, you should approach the Chair of the Board of Directors or the Deputy Chair.
- 6.2 The action Heads Up takes will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may:
- be investigated internally by management, or through the disciplinary or other internal process
  - be referred to the Police
  - form the subject of an independent inquiry
  - Referral to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- 6.3 In order to protect individuals and Heads Up, 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 within the scope of specific procedures (e.g. child protection or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- 6.4 An appropriate manager or BOD's member will conduct preliminary enquiries into the matters you have raised. In order to determine whether your concern needs to be formally investigated the manager will seek advice from NSPCC whistleblowing helpline and, where appropriate, safeguarding professionals.
- 6.5 The formal investigation will identify what, if any, action is required to address the concerns you identified via the Whistleblowing Procedure. This may involve disciplinary action against another Heads Up employee or the involvement of agencies such as the Police or Safeguarding professionals.
- 6.6 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- 6.7 You will be written to within twenty working days.

**7. Review and monitoring**

- 7.1 This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed by the Board yearly or sooner if one of the following occurs:
  - Changes in Legislation
  - An issue with the current policy is identified

**8. Confirmation of understanding**

- 8.1 Heads Up staff: [click here](#) to confirm you have read and understood this policy. If the hyperlink doesn't work please email [hello@headsupleicester.org.uk](mailto:hello@headsupleicester.org.uk) to confirm.

**9. Revision History**

Revision	Date	Changes Made
V1	22.12.20	Reformatted into Heads Up standard template
V2	23.09.24	None