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Staff Whistle - blowing Guidance Policy
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Policy Drafted By - Lucy Prew - Centre Manager

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Date for Review -

1. Introduction

The Birth and Beyond Centre; is committed to the highest possible standard of operation, probity and accountability, and recognises that its workers are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within the centre. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the centre, and they may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances, it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who raise concerns from victimization or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, the Birth and Beyond encourages its workers with serious concerns about any aspect of the centre's work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, **within** the centre according to the procedure in Section 5, rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

2. Objective

The aim of this policy and associated procedures is to establish an internal mechanism that will encourage and enable workers to raise serious concerns about any aspect of the centre, (which do not meet the criteria for being dealt with as a complaint or grievance), in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the centre continues to improve its services and provides best value.

3. Scope

Concerns that should be raised via the Whistle blowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other centre employees, private contractors, volunteers and/or Governors and be about something that is perceived as:

- Unlawful; or Against the centre's policies; or falling below established standard or practice; or amounting to improper conduct.

Concerns that fall outside the scope of the Whistle blowing Policy are those raised by workers:

About their own conditions of service: these should be addressed via the centre's Grievance Procedure or Bullying and Harassment at Work Procedure, depending on the nature/seriousness of the complaint.

4. Procedures

Procedures for reporting and investigating 'whistle blowing' concerns have been developed to ensure that: avenues exist (first approach should be made to your line-manager if appropriate or to the Manager, if appropriate or to the Deputy Manager for employees to raise concerns internally as a matter of course, and receive feedback on any action taken;

Concerns are taken seriously and dealt with quickly and appropriately;

Employees are reassured that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith;

Employees can take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the centre's response e.g. the Local Authority or Ofsted;

Issues raised are addressed via other procedures as appropriate, e.g. anti-fraud and corruption, grievance, disciplinary, health & safety, harassment, child protection and adult abuse procedures; and

Appropriate records are maintained for monitoring purposes.



Anonymous Allegations

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6. Principles

This policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

All workers have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.

The responsibility for expressing concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour rests with **all** workers, and under the Centre's Health & Safety Policy workers are expected to raise concerns about potential health and safety risks.

The Centre will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect employees when they raise a concern in good faith.

The centre will do its best to protect an employee's identity when he/she raises a concern and does not want his/her name to be disclosed. However, if the concern raised needs to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedure, the employee may be required to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence.

In some circumstances the Centre may have to disclose the identity of the employee without his/her consent, although this will be discussed with the employee first.

Appropriate advice and support will be made available to workers who raise concerns.

Employees who raise concerns will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.

The Centre will not tolerate malicious or vexatious allegations, which may be considered a disciplinary offence.

7. Review and Monitoring

The Centre manager and the Full Governing Body are responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy in accordance with agreed performance indicators:

- The number of concerns rose via the Whistle blowing policy;
- The nature and type of concerns rose;
- The number of concerns raised dealt with via the grievance and complaints procedures;
- The number of concerns resolved at the initial discussion stage of the procedure;
- The number of concerns investigated via other procedures, e.g. child protection, disciplinary and health and safety procedures; and
- The number of concerns rose externally.