

Whistleblowing Policy

Agreed by trustees: 14/5/2024

1. The aims of this Policy are:
 - to encourage staff and volunteers to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected, wherever possible;
 - to provide staff and volunteers with guidance as to how to raise those concerns; and
 - to reassure staff and volunteers that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

2. Whistleblowing is disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work, as defined by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the “Act”). The Act specifies that any disclosure of information, which in the reasonable belief of the worker making the disclosure tends to show one or more of the following, is a protected disclosure under the Act:
 - criminal activity;
 - miscarriages of justice;
 - danger to health and safety;
 - damage to the environment;
 - failure to comply with any legal obligation;
 - the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

3. A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern), you should report it under this policy.
4. We hope that, in many cases, you will be able to raise your concerns with your supervisor. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases they may refer the matter to the PCH Whistleblowing Officer.
5. However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your supervisor has not addressed your concern, or you would prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact the PCH Whistleblowing Officer, Clive Copus (PCH trustee and secretary) at **clive@pregnancycrisishelpline.org.uk**
6. We hope that staff and volunteers will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this Policy. Proper investigation may be difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you and it can often be difficult to establish if the allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer and appropriate measures can be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt, you can seek advice from Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), the independent whistleblowing charity who offer a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this Policy.
7. Once you have raised your concern, it will be assessed to determine what initial action or further investigation should be taken. You will be told:
 - who is handling the matter;
 - how to contact them; and
 - whether your further assistance will be needed.
8. If you request it, a written summary of your concern and how it will be handled will be provided, including the timescales within which you should expect a response, if this is possible.

The person appointed to deal with your allegation will be responsible for making a decision at the earliest opportunity on how they will deal with the allegation and must ensure that this is appropriately communicated and documented. They will also ensure that disclosures are logged and monitored and that response timeframes are provided to you.

9. It may not be possible to tell you the precise action taken if this could infringe a duty of confidence owed to someone else. The process will be as open as possible within these constraints.
10. Following the initial assessment, the Whistleblowing Officer may appoint a team/individual with relevant experience or specialist knowledge to undertake further investigations, should it be deemed necessary. You may be called upon to attend meetings in order to provide further information.
11. Whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, PCH will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this Policy, you can help to achieve this.
12. The law recognises that, in some circumstances, it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body, such as a regulator. It will very rarely (if ever) be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone externally. Advice is available from the independent whistleblowing charity, Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), who operate a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern. Their contact details are:

Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520

website: www.pcaaw.co.uk

Online contact form: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/>

13. It is understandable that whistle-blowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and transparency

and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this Policy even if they turn out to be mistaken.

14. Staff and volunteers should not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately.

15. If, however, PCH concludes that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously, or with a view to personal gain, the whistle-blower will be subject to disciplinary action.

Adoption of the policy

This policy was agreed by the Trustees at the board meeting on 14th May 2024 and will be reviewed regularly:

Signed by:



Toby Cosh

Position:

Chair of Trustees

Date:

15th May 2024