

# Whistleblowing policy

It is the duty of every Trustee, member of staff, and volunteer, to speak-up about genuine concerns in relation to criminal activity, breach of a legal obligation (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, and the cover-up of any of these in the workplace. This duty applies whether or not the information is confidential.

**SicKids** is committed to ensuring that any concerns of the above nature will be taken seriously and investigated. A disclosure to **SicKids** will be protected if the person making the disclosure has an honest and reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur. Trustees, staff, and volunteers who raise concerns reasonably and responsibly will not be penalised in any way.

## Who this policy is for?

This policy is for people employed by, or volunteering with, **SicKids**. For the purposes of this policy only, this is defined as someone who is:

- employed on a permanent or fixed term contract of employment;
- on secondment to **SicKids**;
- on a temporary contract or employed through an agency to work for **SicKids**;
- an independent consultant for **SicKids**;
- a volunteer or Trustee for **SicKids**;
- a contractor or supplier of services to **SicKids**.

## Guiding principles

To ensure that this policy is adhered to, and to assure everyone that the concern will be taken seriously, **SicKids** will:

- not allow the person raising the concern to be victimised for doing so;
- treat victimisation of whistle blowers as a serious matter that may lead to disciplinary action;
- not attempt to conceal evidence of poor or unacceptable practice;

- ensure confidentiality clauses in contracts do not restrict, forbid, or penalise whistle blowing;
- liaise with other organisations, when necessary, to whom anyone may report malpractice.

## Procedure

Any individual who has reasonable suspicion, of a genuine concern, as outlined above, should initially take their concerns to the Medical Director of **SickKids**. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, or if their concern is related to the Medical Director, they should contact one of the other Trustees. It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure may be a daunting and difficult experience. An individual may choose to be accompanied or represented by a friend, representative or colleague at any stage of this procedure. All reported incidents will be investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only those people who need to know, being informed.

The Medical Director or Trustee will establish and record the basis of the concerns that have been raised and establish what further actions are required. The Board of Trustees will be informed of all reported disclosures and the actions being taken. The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible and normally within 35 working days of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the person making the disclosure will be informed in writing.

If an individual is not satisfied with the response received and any subsequent action taken, they should put their concerns in writing to the Head of Communications who will arrange any further investigation as s/he thinks appropriate. A written response will be sent to the individual concerned.

In some situations, individuals may want to raise concerns via an alternative organisation, for example:

- the Charity Commission (further information for charitable organisations can be found on its website [http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Our\\_regulatory\\_activity/Reporting\\_issues/Trustee\\_employee\\_and\\_volunteer\\_guidance\\_index.aspx](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Our_regulatory_activity/Reporting_issues/Trustee_employee_and_volunteer_guidance_index.aspx))
- the independent charity Public Concern at Work (<http://www.pcaw.org.uk>)
- the Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS; [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)).

These organisations are well placed to offer additional advice, support, and signposting where necessary.