



GRANGE INFANT SCHOOL

REPORTING CONCERNS AT WORK - 'WHISTLE- BLOWING'

To achieve and maintain the highest standards of openness and accountability within Hampshire County Council, employees have a duty and a right to disclose concerns, in confidence, without fear of subsequent victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. This will detail the procedures to be followed where an alleged matter of serious concern perpetrated by a member of staff has been observed and reported. This is known as "whistle-blowing".

1. It is HCC policy to:

- encourage staff to question and act upon concerns about bad practice and to feel confident in raising serious concerns;
- provide avenues for staff to raise those concerns;
- ensure that staff raising concerns receive feedback on any action taken;
- provide guidance to staff on how to take matters further if they are not satisfied;
- reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made the disclosure in good faith.

2. This policy covers major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures, and includes:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- miscarriages of justice
- health and safety risks (to members of the public as well as to staff)
- damage to the environment
- unauthorised use of public funds
- fraud and corruption
- abuse of clients;
- abuse or intimidation of staff;
- other unethical conduct.

These may be breaches of the Council's Standing Orders or policies, or may be matters that staff are concerned about in relation to established local standards of practice or their own experience.

3. Persons reporting such incidents will include the following:

- Members of HCC staff
- Service users
- Families, relatives and friends of service users
- Professional persons acting on behalf of or having care for a service user e.g. an advocate, Minister of Religion, Doctor or other Health professional

4. Where possible these concerns should be raised with the immediate line manager. However, if this is an inappropriate person because of the nature of the concerns, the seriousness and sensitivity or the issues, you should approach one of the following, as appropriate: An HR practitioner through the Employment Practice Centre or a senior departmental manager. The complainant should be assured that appropriate enquiries will be made to establish the nature / reality of the incident, and that such enquiries will be carried out discreetly and in confidence. Wherever possible, the identity of the person reporting the incident will be kept anonymous.

5. The person making the complaint will receive written acknowledgment within 10 working days, explaining how the complaint will be address, what action will be taken and an estimate of how long it will take.



6. Where the alleged offence is of a serious nature, the following action will be taken:

- 6.1 The staff member at the centre of the allegation will be sent home immediately on full pay pending further direction from senior management, at the earliest opportunity. The staff member will be informed of the necessity for this action and will be assured that, at this point, there is no inference of guilt.
- 6.2 Where necessary, an external agency may be involved e.g. the police, CSCI.
- 6.3 A full investigation will be undertaken, interviewing all parties concerned in the allegation. This may include staff, service users, service user's relatives, advocates and other professionals as appropriate.

7. Following completion of the investigation:

- 7.1 If the allegations are justified against a staff member the staff concerned will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate. Criminal or Civil charges may be brought by the Police or other parties, depending upon the circumstances.
- 7.2 If the allegations are not proven, any staff member accused will be restored to full duties.

8. Where the allegation is not proven, but has been proven to be a malicious action on the part of the accusing party, the accuser will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

9. If the investigation results in departmental management action or the prosecution and conviction of the staff member this result must be communicated, in writing to the Commission for Social Care Inspection for consideration of permanent inclusion on the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Register.

10. Depending on the severity of the incident reported advice, support and assistance may be required from Senior Managers in Adult Services and/or Human Resources. All staff involved should be reminded of the Employee Support Line.

The following people may be referred to or involved in these investigations: -

For general concerns (as appropriate):

- your manager
- an HR practitioner in the Employment Practice Centre
- a senior manager in your department
- the Director of Human Resources
- the Monitoring Officer
- the Chief Executive

For all financial issues (fraud, corrupt practices and other irregularities):

- the Chief Internal Auditor
- the Audit Consultant
- the Audit Senior

For all matters concerning service users in Social Services Department:

- The Speak Out scheme
- For confidential support and counselling:
- Employee Support Line (esl), tel: 023 8062 6606

These procedures will be reviewed annually.

Date reviewed: May 2020

Date for next review: May 2021