



Pro Corda Trust

Whistle-blowing policy and procedure January 2019

Purpose

Whistle-blowing is an important aspect of safeguarding, where staff/volunteers are encouraged to express concerns or grievances about their organisation without fear of victimisation, discrimination or reprisals in any form.

If any member of staff or volunteer raises concerns about a serious problem in their organisation then they are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which came into force in July 1999. This Act applies where a worker has a reasonable belief that their disclosure demonstrates one or more of the following offences or breaches:

- A criminal offence
- Breach of a legal obligation
- Miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the environment
- Deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above
- Financial frauds and malpractice
- Other types of corruption
- Abuse or neglect of vulnerable people/customers
- Poor standards of service
- Damaging personal conflicts at senior level
- Bullying, harassment or victimisation in the workplace
- Danger to health or safety of an individual

Persons affected by this Policy

All Pro Corda staff

Employees

Volunteers

Freelance staff

Suppliers/contractors

Service users and families, parents/carers

Trustees

Policy

We support measures that protect whistle-blowers from any form of victimisation. We have a procedure to ensure concerns are dealt with effectively and efficiently and to preserve, as far as possible, the confidentiality of the person who has raised the concern.

As part of that commitment, we encourage anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of the work to come forward and express their concerns. In many cases, concerns or complaints will be dealt with through the procedures mentioned.

Procedure to Follow

The following procedures are in place to make provision for anyone within Pro Corda to disclose information of suspected malpractice (as cited above in Purpose) on a confidential basis and to be protected against victimisation, reprisals or dismissal.

Concerns should be reported at an early stage before problems have a chance to become serious. We will support concerned employees, freelance staff, suppliers, volunteers, service users or any other person and protect them from reprisals or victimisation. Confidentiality will be respected.

Any member of staff, whether an employee, freelance or volunteer, found trying to discourage concerned employees, suppliers, volunteers or service users from coming forward to express a concern will be subject to disciplinary action. In the same way, an employee or other member of staff criticising or victimising an employee, volunteer, supplier or service user as a result of a concern being expressed will also face disciplinary action.

Who to Contact

In the first instance, anyone wishing to raise a concern should do so, in confidence, to their manager.

If for some reason this is not possible, (e.g. the concern relates to their manager) then they should report it to another senior manager or the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Concerns can be communicated verbally or in writing.

If policy and procedures within the organisation are working properly there should be no need for contact to be made with an external agency to express concerns. However, if these internal procedures have been exhausted, then the concerns may be reported as follows:

- If the problem involves a senior member of staff of the organisation – contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees

- In the case of criminal offence – contact the police and notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of abuse of children and vulnerable people – notify the safeguarding lead who will notify the LADO, local authority social services and the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of abuse of public funds – contact Companies House and notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of any fraud – contact the independent examiner and notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- To make a referral or for advice if concerned and unsure what to do – contact Customer First 08456 066 167 or the Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub 0345 606 1499.

Matters should not be raised with the press or other media (to do so will result in a disciplinary action).

Dealing with Concerns

All concerns will be investigated carefully and thoroughly. Every effort will be made not to reveal the whistle-blower’s identity.

If appropriate, results of investigations and any action that is proposed will be passed on to the person expressing the initial concern. However, confidentiality needs to be maintained at all times.

If it is found that malicious, unfounded allegations have been made this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Signed:	Andrew Quartermain CEO
Date:	January 2019
Renewal date:	January 2019
Review/renewal dates:	January 2020