



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

February 2024

Date of Approval	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Safeguarding Trustee	Review Date
01/02/2024	Andrew Quartermain, CEO	Priscilla Turner	01/01/2025

Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Whistleblowing is an important aspect of ensuring that Pro Corda is a safe, protective and healthy environment for all those in the care of the organisation, for the workforce and the success, welfare and for the high standards Pro Corda adheres to.

It requires all Employees and Volunteers working at Pro Corda to raise and report concerns regarding any person or member (members) of Staff who are seen to, or suspected of, causing harm to an individual or to the Pro Corda organisation.

Any Employee or Volunteer raising a concern is protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Pro Corda abides by the ruling of this Act and will ensure the protection of any member of staff who makes a disclosure ensuring that they can safely do so without fear of victimisation, reprisal, discrimination or disadvantage.

Pro Corda will take action against any staff member(s) who attempt(s) to prevent a disclosure, or, in any way, acts, as a result of the disclosure, against the person making the disclosure.

Confidentiality will be observed as far as possible but if you are required to give evidence Pro Corda will ensure you are fully supported and guided in doing so. (*See section B Addendum 1. Confidentiality and reporting a concern*)

For the purpose of this document all persons involved in working with Pro Corda i.e. Employed Staff, Volunteers and Freelance Staff, will be referred to as 'Employees'.

This Policy may involve not only Staff, but Service Users and also Parents/Carers who may themselves pose a risk to others or the organisation.

A. Area of Concerns

1. The welfare of a child, young person or adult
2. Fraud (stealing, mismanagement or misappropriation of funds)
3. Miscarriages of justice
4. Concerning working practices and standards of service
5. Concerns about the honesty and integrity of any staff member
6. Conflict in the workplace, poor working relations including bullying, harassment

1. The welfare of a Child, Young person or Adult in the care of Pro Corda

All Employees and Volunteers need to feel confident to voice concerns regarding any attitudes or actions that may result in harm to a child, young person or adult in the care of Pro Corda. This includes all forms of abuse and neglect either direct or indirect.

Categories of abuse or neglect are well documented in Pro Corda's Safeguarding Procedures and are underpinned by the Government document 'Working together to Safeguard Children 2018'.

These categories frequently overlap and harm in one area can also mean harm in another.

(Physical Abuse includes any form of physical abuse or punishment including rough handling, inappropriate restraint or the neglect of a person's range of physical needs.

Sexual Abuse involves inappropriate touching and fondling or performing any sexual act on or in the presence of a person attending Pro Corda. It also involves grooming (inviting an inappropriate close relationship either in person or via the internet or other media) or photographing a person naked or the sharing of sexualized pictures/photographs for sexual gratification.

Emotional Abuse This involves causing distress by shouting or speaking in a way that ridicules, belittles, insults or demeans. This also includes ignoring, isolating and not responding to a person's emotional needs.

Neglect This involves neglecting to ensure that the range of physical and emotional needs of a person in the care of Pro Corda.)

If any of the concerns above are witnessed or suspected these must immediately be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead Andrew Quartermain, who has responsibility to inform the local Authority Social Care and the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

If this is a serious concern and you are unable to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (CEO Andrew Quartermain) and are unsure what to do, you can contact the Chair of Trustees Graham Bowler (chair@procorda.com) and the Suffolk Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 0345 606 1499. If the subject is discussed anonymously you can seek advice from the agency, but where the name of the subject needs to be given this constitutes a referral and the agency will also ask for your details in order to progress any investigation.

Any such concerns should be reinforced in writing and signed. Failure to report such concerns will be seen as a breach of employment or contract.

2. Fraud

This includes mismanagement, stealing or improper use of Pro Corda's money or assets or corruptly receiving any gift or advantage.

Any such concerns should be reported to the CEO (Andrew Quartermain).

In the event that the concern relates to the CEO this should be reported to the Chair of Trustees (Graham Bowler).

Financial regulations require that any suspicions of fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity are reported to Pro Corda's internal Auditor for possible investigation. This will normally be the responsibility of the CEO.

3. Miscarriage of Justice

This applies where there is a concern that a person is wrongly accused and punished or becomes targeted for something for which they are not responsible and which affects their reputation.

This should be corrected as far as possible with the person wrongly accusing or punishing that person and if this is not resolved and it is believed the person is being victimised and targeted then this must be reported to the CEO.

4. Concerning Working Practices and standards of service including wilful damage of property.

This relates to all areas of practice and working conditions, for example:

- Employees not fulfilling their contractual responsibilities; repeated lack of punctuality, disregard for safety and safe practice, poor cleanliness and hygiene, poor standards of care, insensitivity to others, poor quality of food and delivery, careless or wilful damage of property
- It may also refer to a failure to ensure a safe, appropriately equipped and work friendly environment and sufficient and appropriately skilled and trained staff.

Any of these concerns should be reported to the CEO and should the concerns not be addressed or relate to persistent failures in the Organisation they should then be reported to the Chair of Trustees.

5. Concerns about the honesty and integrity of any staff member.

Any such concerns are to be reported to the CEO.

6. Conflict and poor working relations including bullying, harassment

Pro Corda has a duty of care to provide a safe working environment and to treat its employees with respect.

Any Conflict in the workplace needs to be addressed and not allowed to fester or continue. Where it is seen to occur without resolution and is affecting the working environment this must be brought to the attention of firstly the senior staff member of that Department and if not resolved, to the CEO.

If as the result of a disclosure an employee finds continuing to work in their current working environment untenable, Pro Corda will seek to redeploy that person, taking account of their generic and specialist skills, abilities and experience.

B. ADDENDUMS

1. Confidentiality and reporting a concern

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the complainant.

However there may be circumstances where this is not possible and where further enquiries or legal action may involve the complainant in providing witness statements.

This policy encourages the complainant to put their name to the allegation. Anonymous allegations which cannot be further clarified are more difficult to progress and will need to be considered by the CEO or Chair of Trustees regarding the seriousness, credibility and ability to confirm the allegation and whether further investigation is indicated.

Any allegation should be confirmed in writing with time(s), place(s) and date(s). It is also the duty of the person, to whom the allegation is reported, to keep accurate records even if anonymous allegations are not investigated. These documents must be safely filed and stored.

Where there is a build up of concerns it is advised that you keep notes on what you have observed and heard. Sometimes it is the build up of small concerns that lead to a bigger picture.

If you are given information by someone unprepared to report the concern then the complainant has a responsibility to pass on this concern.

Should there be any malicious, unfounded allegations made against a person, this will be dealt with seriously under Pro Corda's disciplinary procedures.

2. Legislation underpinning this Whistleblowing Policy applying to or for the protection of yourself and others

- *The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998*
- *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999(regulation 14)*
- *Employment Rights Act 2996 (sections 43A to 43L)*
- *Police Reform Act 2002*
- *Employment Rights Act (section 103A)*

Re safeguarding of Children and Young persons

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022*

3. Key Contacts

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