

**WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

1. **About this Policy**
   1. We are committed to honesty and integrity in our church life and we expect all involved to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing, including “covering up”, should be reported as soon as possible.
   2. This policy covers all ministers, officers, volunteers, employees and casual workers who are working on behalf of the church.
   3. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.
2. **What Is Whistleblowing?**

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations including conflict of interest.

**How to Raise a Concern**

* + 1. If any person (including a child or vulnerable adult) is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm you should first contact the Police on 999.
    2. If you have received a direct allegation of abuse, and the child/adult is not in immediate danger, or after calling the Police, you should contact the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Incumbent or Diocesan Safeguarding Team in accordance with the Procedure for Responding to a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation.
  1. Otherwise, we hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with the person to whom you are responsible. However, where you prefer not to raise it with that person for any reason, you should contact the Churchwarden or the Vicar. If this is not appropriate, you should contact the Archdeacon Pastor at the diocese.
  2. You can make your disclosure orally or in written form. In your disclosure, you should:

a) provide any relevant context and background, including relevant dates, venues, names etc

b) state clearly the reason why the situation causes for concern.

c) You should say that you are raising your concern using the whistleblowing policy and whether you wish your identity to be kept confidential.

* 1. We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a friend, colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

1. **Confidentiality**

We hope that whistleblowing concerns can be voiced openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

1. **External Disclosures**
   1. The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing associated with church activities. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.
   2. 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 like the Charity Commission. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.
2. **Protection and Support for Whistleblowers**
   1. We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
   2. If you have raised a safeguarding concern with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team then the team will usually liaise with the Vicar about your support.
   3. Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Churchwarden **OR** Vicar immediately. If you are an employee and the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure (contained within our HR Policy).
   4. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) protects whistleblowers from negative treatment or unfair dismissal. It is part of the Employments Rights Act and makes it unlawful to subject a worker to negative treatment or to dismiss them because they have raised a whistleblowing concern.
   5. However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.
   6. Protect, formerly Public Concern at Work, is a whistleblowing charity operating in the United Kingdom. Established in 1993, Protect advises individuals with whistleblowing concerns at work, supports organisations with their whistleblowing arrangements and informs public policy and seeks legislative change. Protect operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are as follows:

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| **Protect**  (Independent whistleblowing charity) | Helpline: (020) 3117 2520  Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/contact-protect-advice-line/> which includes a contact form. |

Source of information from the Church Office:

<https://assets-global.website-files.com/5f8847f125310caaee6aefc0/61570fc74ed3b76fb4d92526_Whistleblowing%20Policy%20and%20Procedures.pdf>

Advice from the Charity Commission can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-serious-wrongdoing-at-a-charity-as-a-worker-or-volunteer>

Government advice for whistleblowers can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

Adopted by the PCC on 30/01/2024