

Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all organisation's that provide services for, or work with, children are required to have appropriate whistleblowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.

Whistleblowing may also apply to situations of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour in situations unrelated to children or adults who may be vulnerable, and these same principles can be applied.

Members of a congregation should be encouraged to acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour to the attention of the Chaplain, Churchwarden, Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer or a member of the Chaplaincy Council.

It is often the case that a co-worker or co-voluntary worker may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express concerns, feeling that this would be disloyal; he or she may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or adult who may be vulnerable continuing to be unnecessarily at risk.

Reasons for whistleblowing:

- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks to others.
- To prevent becoming implicated oneself.

What stops people from whistleblowing:

- Starting a chain of events which spirals out of control.
- Disrupting the work or project.
- Fear of getting it wrong.
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers or reputations.
- Fear of not being believed.

How to raise a concern:

- Inform the Chaplain, Churchwarden or Chaplaincy Safeguarding Officer.
- If it is not possible to raise the concern locally, then inform or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST).
- If the concern is about a member of the clergy, contact the Archdeacon or the Head of Safeguarding (HoS). If the whistleblower feels unable to raise the matter with the DST, they should refer to the Chief Operating Officer and the Diocesan Bishop who will decide on the best next steps.
- Concerns, suspicions or uneasiness about practice or behaviour of an individual should be voiced as soon as possible.
- Be specific about what practice is concerning; what has been heard or what has been observed.
- Ideally put concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, and providing dates and times.
- Provide as many facts as possible; do not rely on rumour or opinion.
- You are encouraged to put your name to any disclosure; however, any concern raised anonymously should be considered, taking into account the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.
- If the matter concerns a complaint about the actions of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team then it will be treated under the Diocesan Safeguarding Complaints Policy.

What happens next:

- If the concern about practice, performance or behaviour relates to safeguarding children or adults who may be vulnerable, it should be investigated according to the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy.
- If the concern does not relate to safeguarding children or adults who may be vulnerable, it will normally be referred to the Chaplain, (if it is about the Chaplain then it will be referred to the Archdeacon and otherwise to the Diocesan Bishop.)
- The whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of a concern or investigate it.
- Within the bounds of confidentiality, the whistleblower should be given as much information as possible on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- The Chaplain or Churchwarden or Diocesan Senior Staff member dealing with the matter should do all they can to ensure that the whistleblower is not harassed or victimised.

- No action will be taken against a whistleblower if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations from a whistleblower will be considered very seriously and may result in disciplinary action in the case of a paid employee or office holder.

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