



Good Company Hub
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Whistleblowing Policy for Volunteers

Introduction

Good Company (Surrey) is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. In line with this commitment, if you have concerns regarding our organisation's performance, standards, or conduct then you should feel free to raise those concerns.

"Whistleblowing", in the legal sense, refers to the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998), which protects employees from any harm or victimisation that could come from reporting a concern.

Even though volunteers who want to raise a concern are not given the same protections as employees under the law, we know that volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation and deserve to be able to raise any issues that concern them. We have therefore created this policy to provide volunteers with the same protections as employees, so that:

1. Volunteers feel confident about raising concerns.
2. Volunteers know that there is a process they can follow if they have a concern.
3. Volunteers know that they will be protected from any victimisation that could result from raising a complaint.
4. Volunteers know how to pursue concerns externally if they are not satisfied with Good Company's internal response.
5. If anything that constitutes a whistleblowing concern happens, we will be alerted to it and can take steps to fix it – to act with integrity and within the law.

What is whistleblowing?

"Whistleblowing" as a general term is when someone at an organisation reports a concern about improper actions – of their colleagues or the organisation – that may cause harm to people or to the organisation. The whistleblower should believe that there has been, or is likely to be:

- A criminal offence.
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation.



- A miscarriage of justice.
- A health and safety risk to an individual.
- Damage to the environment.
- Concealment of the above.

The whistleblower should report “in good faith”, meaning that they reasonably believe the allegation is true – even it later turns out to have been incorrect. However, it is not necessary for the whistleblower to prove that the alleged wrongdoing has occurred or is likely to occur.

Whistleblowing is not the same as a complaint or grievance, which involve personal mistreatment, and the whistleblower rarely has a direct personal interest in the outcome of any investigation.

Protection from victimisation

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998), an employee who reports a whistleblowing concern is legally protected from victimisation.

Victimisation occurs where someone is treated less favourably because they have made a complaint or assisted someone else in making a complaint of discrimination or harassment.

Though it is not required by law, Good Company (Surrey) extends this commitment to everyone who works with us, including volunteers and other non-staff personnel. Even if your concern turns out to not be true, or if there is not enough evidence, you will not face any repercussions.

However, if you make a complaint maliciously and knowing that it is untrue, we may terminate your role or take legal action.

Good Company’s Whistleblowing Procedure

Reporting a concern internally

We encourage volunteers to use this procedure if they are concerned about any wrongdoing. In most cases, concerns should first be reported to your line manager, who will deal with the disclosure in confidence. If the relevant manager cannot address the concern themselves, they will refer the concern to the Whistleblowing Officer.

Dependent on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter, and who may be involved, you can also report directly to the Whistleblowing Officer. If the matter concerns the Whistleblowing Officer, it should be raised with the Trustees.

The Whistleblowing Officer for Good Company (Surrey) is Jen Barnard.

It is helpful to raise concerns in writing, where possible – setting out the background and history of concerns and indicating the reasons for them.

We take very seriously any concerns which are brought under this legislation. In the event that you feel that you are suffering a detriment as a result of making a protected disclosure, please alert the Whistleblowing Officer as soon as possible, so that steps can be taken to assist you.

Confidentiality

The matter will be treated confidentially if you request it. Your name or position will not be revealed without your permission, unless Good Company must do so by law. If the concern cannot be resolved without revealing your identity, the Whistleblowing Officer will discuss with you whether and how to proceed, based on the seriousness of the concern, the plausibility of the allegation, and whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

Investigation

The way we address your concern will depend upon the nature of the issue – however, an internal investigation is likely to be appropriate, which will usually be conducted by the Whistleblowing Officer and/or the Board of Trustees.

Your concern may be referred to the police, social and other services, an external auditor, or an independent investigator. You may need to give evidence in criminal or other proceedings.

Outcome

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed. You will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and your confidentiality will continue to be protected. We will give you feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation, wherever possible.

If you are unhappy with the outcome, or you feel that you are unable to raise your concerns within the charity, you could consider raising them with an appropriate authority, for example:

- The police, about a crime or if you're worried about someone's safety.
- HMRC, if you have concerns about tax, like money laundering or tax evasion.
- Action Fraud, if you suspect fraud.
- The Charity Commission.

Other policies and procedures

In some situations, other policies may apply instead of this one. These include:

- Employees should refer to our Whistleblowing Policy for Employees.
- Bullying and harassment are covered under our Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy.
- Abuse of children and adults at risk, which can be addressed under our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, as appropriate.
- Reports of wrongdoing that are made by people outside Good Company, which can be addressed through our Complaints Procedure or EERN Complaints Procedure.
- Personal complaints, which should be dealt with through our Grievance Procedure.