



Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for Staff

Policy agreed	Oct 2021, Reviewed October 2022
Date of next review	October 2023 (annual review)
Signed: Agreed by Trustees October 2022	

The Aims of this Policy

The whistleblowing policy and procedure are designed to protect employees who want to disclose and report certain types of wrongdoing that they have experienced which affect other people – other staff, members or the general public. Abbey Physic Community Garden (APCG) believes no member of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

Whistleblowers are protected by law (the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and should not be treated unfairly or lose their jobs because of the disclosures that they make.

It is important that any criminal behaviour or other wrongdoing by an employee, or any individual undertaking work with the organisation is reported and properly dealt with.

Scope of the policy

This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest. Issues raised by whistleblowers may be investigated initially but may then lead to other procedures e.g. if investigation shows that it requires disciplinary action. These concerns could include:

- Safeguarding issues
- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal any of these

Confidentiality

APCG will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the employee making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. As a small organisation we recognise that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure e.g. if the whistleblower needs to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

Process

If an employee has a concern, they should first raise it with their line manager verbally or in writing. If they feel that this person may be involved or do not wish to approach them, then they should approach the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

If the employee feels a manager/trustee may be involved, the employee should report the matter to an alternative trustee – either our Treasurer or our Company Secretary.

Once the issue has been raised then the organisation will undertake an investigation and make an objective assessment of the concern. This will involve looking at the evidence provided, exploring any other relevant evidence and reaching a conclusion about the best course of action. This may involve our trustees but in exceptional circumstances we may bring seek independent help, either from a volunteer or from Swale CVS. The employee will be kept advised of progress and the organisation will ensure the action necessary to resolve the concern is taken. We will aim to respond to the matter within one week and complete the investigation as soon as possible after the issue has been raised.

In all cases, the employee is encouraged to exhaust APCG's internal policies and procedures before contacting external sources such as the Health & Safety Executive, Environment Agency, Police etc.

Monitoring and review

The Trustees will keep the effectiveness of the policy under review. We will aim to review the policy at least annually or in the light of any experience or changes in circumstances.

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