Whistleblowing Policy - (Public Interest Disclosure)

Staff members are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong, inappropriate or at odds with the integrity of the organisation. We would encourage you to contact the MD or a board member where possible.

This process outlines how to raise serious concerns which are in the public interest where an internal approach either is not possible or has been unsuccessful.

We recognise the importance of providing a safe route for anonymous whistleblowing, and of reassuring potential whistleblowers that they will not suffer any retribution for making a disclosure that is in the public interest. You are protected by law.

We will aim to keep the identity of the whistleblower anonymous, but this may not always be possible due to legal or contractual obligations. If staff feel the need to protect their identity, they can use a confidential mail system to submit their concerns e.g. Proton Mail or they can create a confidential email account which does not disclose their identity.

The types of issues which are covered include:

- A criminal offence e.g. fraud
- Concerns about suitability of staff working with children
- Is someone's health and safety is in danger or safeguarding risk
- Risk or actual damage to the environment
- A miscarriage of justice
- If you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

Personal grievances or complaints about how you are being treated by a member of staff or board are not covered by this process. You should use the internal complaints or grievance policy.

PACE expects that:

- Any whistleblower must disclose the information in good faith
- Any whistleblower must believe it to be substantially true
- Any whistleblower must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- Any whistleblower must not seek any personal gain

PACE maintains a clear and accessible whistleblowing culture in which all employees, children & young people, trainees, volunteers and contractors are encouraged and supported to raise concerns about safeguarding, welfare, malpractice or unsafe practice without fear of reprisal.

Concerns may be raised through established internal reporting routes, including line managers, senior leaders or the designated safeguarding lead, and may also be reported confidentially where requested.

Where individuals feel that concerns have not been appropriately addressed internally, PACE provides clear information about external reporting channels, including Ofsted and the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line. All whistleblowing concerns are taken seriously, recorded appropriately, investigated in a timely manner and responded to in line with safeguarding procedures, and individuals raising concerns are protected from victimisation or detriment in accordance with organisational policy and statutory guidance.

Who to tell and what to expect

If you can, please try to raise the concern directly with your manager, the MD or trustees. If you cannot contact a member of staff please contact the chair of the board. Please keep a record of the information you share and the dates the communications.

How we will deal with your whistleblowing concern

Initial Assessment: Within **10 working days**, we will write to you explaining how the matter will be handled and whether a formal investigation will proceed.

Investigation: We aim to conclude investigations within **28 working days**. You will be informed of the outcome, subject to legal constraints

If you're not satisfied with how PACE deals with your concern

Tell someone else (for example a more senior member of staff) or a prescribed person or body if you believe your concern was not taken seriously or the wrongdoing is still going on.

Useful Contacts

Internal

- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)
  Camden Sq. – Lauraya Ramos
  t: 0207 485 6827 e: lramos@apceforall.com
  Fairfield – Angela Ramos
  t: 0207 183 5120 opt. 2 e: aramos@apceforall.com
  Fortune Green. – David Williams
  t: 0207 183 5120 opt. 1 e: dwilliams@apceforall.com

  Specialist Servcie
  Gleny: 0207 183 5120 opt. 4 e: gjames@paceforall.com

- Managing Director / Interim MD (James Fornara) - for concerns involving centre managers – e: jornara@paceforall.com

- Board of Trustees (via Chair) - for concerns involving senior leadership or the MD
  Sophie Hug –

External - Statutory and Regulatory

- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: **0800 028 0285**, available Monday to Friday 08:00 to 20:00 and weekends 09:00 to 18:00. Email:

- Ofsted: concerns about a registered early years provider can be reported via the online form here (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted/sharing-concerns-and-information-with-ofsted-about-childrens-social-care-services)
- Contact Ofsted about concerns:

  e: CIE@ofsted.gov.uk

  t: 0300 123 4666

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): for concerns involving a professional working with children.
  PACE's LADO is through the London Borough of Camden they cnan be contacted:
  T: 0207 974 4556 e: LADO@camden.gov.uk

- Camden Children's Services: for concerns about a child's welfare
  Main Contact (MASH/Early Help): 020 7974 3317
  Email for Referrals: LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk
  Out of Hours Emergency: 020 7974 4444

- Police: 999 in an emergency; 101 for non-urgent concerns

Legal Protection

- Whistleblowers are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which amended the Employment Rights Act 1996. Staff should not be treated unfairly or lose their job as a result of raising a genuine concern.

If your concern is relating to safeguarding you should contact:

- The Camden Local Authority Designated Officer by emailing LADO@camden.gov.uk or using their referral form.
- OFSTED using their online form, call 0300 123 4666 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You can also contact the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), the whistleblowing charity Protect or your trade union for more guidance.

For more information https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing