

WHISTLEBLOWING

POLICY & PROCEDURES

POLICY STATEMENT

Refugees Welcome recognizes the responsibility it has to its Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for those who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters in the public interest.

This policy applies to all Trustees, Contractors, Advisors and Volunteers.

Policy Date: 13.3.19
By: Anne Towers, Trustee
Status: V2 May 19

Whistleblowing Policy

It is important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by trustees, contractors, advisors or volunteers working on behalf of Refugees Welcome is reported and properly dealt with. We therefore require all individuals to raise any concerns that they may have about the conduct of others or the way in which the organization is run. This policy sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be dealt with.

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for anyone to raise legitimate concerns about specified matters in the public interest. These are called 'qualifying disclosures'. A qualifying disclosure is one made by someone who has a reasonable belief that any of the following is being, has been or is likely to be, committed:

- A criminal offence
- A miscarriage of justice
- An act creating risk to health and safety
- An act causing damage to the environment
- A breach of any other legal obligation
- Concealment of any of the above

It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed – a reasonable belief is sufficient. You have no responsibility for investigating the matter – it is Refugees Welcome's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place. If you make a protected disclosure you have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment or victimized because you have made a disclosure. We encourage you to raise your concerns under this procedure in the first instance.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing in the organization. Trustees, contractors, advisors and volunteers working on behalf of Refugees Welcome should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the issue.
- No trustee, contractor, advisor or volunteer working on behalf of Refugees Welcome will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that continued opportunities for the future or training will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.
- Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a cause for complaint.

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- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure, our complaints procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures. Maliciously making a false allegation will lead to complaints procedures being invoked.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself an offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. You should report the matter to the Chair of Trustees.

Procedure

Stage 1

- In the first instance, any concerns should be raised with the Chair of Trustees who will arrange an investigation of the matter and appoint a Trustee where appropriate to oversee the investigation.
- The investigation may involve you and other individuals involved giving a written statement.
- Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above. Your statement will be taken into account and you will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained.
- The Chair of Trustees or designated Trustee will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency.
- The Chair of Trustees will also invoke any further action required and inform commissioners where required.
- On conclusion of any investigation, you will be told the outcome and what Refugees Welcome has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

Stage 2

If you are concerned that the Chair of Trustees is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant person, you should report the matter to the relevant body. This includes:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Environment Agency
- the Serious Fraud Office
- the Charity Commission
- the Pensions Regulator
- the Information Commissioner
- the Financial Conduct Authority.

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You can find the full list in The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496899/BIS-16-79-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person.pdf

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually for currency and accuracy by the Chair of Trustees or individuals delegated by him/her. This does not prevent any changes taking place to this policy at any other time due to changes in practice or legislation.

Review Date: May 2024

Reviewed: April 2025

SIGNED BY: N. A. Campbell
[Trustee/Chair of Trustees]

DATE: 24.4.25

POSITION in REFUGEES WELCOME: Chair of Trustees

Next Review Date: April 2026