



Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board

Child Protection Whistle Blowing Guidance for Employees

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SWINDON LSCB

Child Protection

Whistle Blowing

Guidance for Employees

This guidance is written for employees working with children and young people in a range of settings and should be read in conjunction with the South West Child Protection Procedures, the LSCB Escalation Policy and your agency's policy for whistle blowing.

Employees must acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult, this is particularly important where the welfare of children and young people may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong, but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young people who are targeted. These children and young people need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

Reasons for whistle blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistle blowing?

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

What happens after you “blow the whistle”?

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries
- Your line manager has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered a disciplinary offence

Self-reporting

There may be occasions when an employee has a personal difficulty, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare of safety of children or young people.

- **Stage 1** - Discuss with Line Manager
- **Stage 2** - If the issue is unresolved or there is not a satisfactory outcome refer the matter to next in Line Manager. On conclusion of the investigation and follow up action the information will be kept secure and confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998)
- **Stage 3** – Once the internal procedures have been exhausted the matter can be referred to an external body or their Member of Parliament. Careful consideration should be given to referring matters outside the organisation as inappropriate disclosure of information i.e such as release of information to the media will be investigated and possible action under the disciplinary procedure may follow

Further advice and support

It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager, the HR department and/or your professional body or trade union. You can also seek advice from the designated person for child protection in your organisation.

*Please note that the term ‘employees’ in this Policy refers to **ALL** organisations that have a working relationship with children and young people*

This policy has been adapted from a document first produced by Jenny Parris, DfES IRSC Co-ordinator, then further adapted by Mary Palazzo, Safe Employment Adviser.