



Very Important People Services

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Title: Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures

Purpose: To provide information and guidance to staff on whistleblowing within the organisation.

Policy: VIPS understand that we have a duty to service users to keep them safe and respect and uphold their human rights. We know that sometimes things can go wrong, but we are committed to put this right and rely on, and expect our staff to tell us when things are going wrong so we can correct these matters before they cause harm to the service user.

Scope: This policy contains information and guidance from legislation and from relevant bodies that all staff are expected to adhere to including:

- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.
- Public Interest Disclosure Act (2013).
- Enterprise and Reform Act (2013).

Managers should check guidance from relevant bodies on a regular basis to ensure they are up-to-date with the latest information about whistleblowing and will amend this policy and its procedures accordingly. Staff are expected to adhere to this legislation through implementation of its policy and procedures. We will treat all whistleblowing concerns in confidence in the first instance.

Whistleblowing definition: Whistleblowing is the duty of staff to disclose any concerns they might have about malpractice, safety, wrongdoing or illegality if they feel it is in the public's best interest to do so.

Whistleblowing procedures

1. Whistleblowing situations

The law protects staff if they disclosure concerns about:

- A criminal offence is being (or has been) committed, e.g. theft.
- Not complying with legal obligations such as the CQC Regulations, e.g. unsafe practice.

- A miscarriage of justice is occurring (or has occurred), e.g. staff are wrongly or falsely accused of a criminal act.
- The health or safety of a service user (or staff) is being compromised, e.g. hoists are not being maintained.
- The environment is being damaged, e.g. organisational awareness of infected waste being sent to landfill.
- Proof that staff are deliberately concealing any of the above.

This might include, for example:

- Abuse.
- Any practice contrary to the way they were trained.
- Theft or other crime.
- Giving false information or hope.
- Lying about care and treatment options.
- Ignoring service user wishes and requests.
- Ignoring mental capacity concerns.
- Treating people disrespectfully or in an undignified manner.
- Breaches of privacy and confidentiality.

2. The steps staff must take when whistleblowing

If staff feel they must disclose information within your organisation, they should take the following steps:

1. Challenge any unsafe practice they witness, sometimes that will be all it takes to improve the situation.
2. If it continues, staff should talk to their line manager or someone senior in the organisation.
3. If they do not feel able to raise their concerns with the line manager or other management, they should consult the whistleblowing policy, and follow that.
4. If your staff still do not get a response about their concerns, they are recommended to raise their concerns with CQC as a public interest disclosure.

3. Expectations of the whistleblowing staff and other staff within the organisation

If staff do blow the whistle on a person or practice, the organisation and other employees will not recriminate against the staff member. This includes victimising staff, treating them unfairly or unequally, withholding rewards owed to them or dismissing them. Where this happens, staff will be disciplined for their practice and will be subject to further training.

The organisation will make sure through training that employees feel protected to positively disclose poor practice.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

Except in the case of criminal activity, poor practice will be used positively as a quality monitoring tool and as a means of improving quality within the organisation.

5. Record keeping

We will record our whistleblowing activities in the following way:

- All disclosures are to be in writing.
- All responses are to be in writing.
- All investigations should include a report of the findings and recommendations.
- Written responses are made to the discloser of the outcome of the investigation, findings and recommendations.
- All recommendations are communicated to staff with timeframes for making sure improvements are made.
- Re-evaluation is carried out 6-monthly and reported upon.

6. Training requirements

Whistleblowing training will include informing staff about this policy and procedures.