

Service Six

PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE (‘WHISTLEBLOWING’) POLICY



Date: April 2017

Review Due By: April 2018

Lead Role/Manager: Chief Executive

Others involved in implementing: Executive Team, Managers and Personnel

What this policy covers

To provide specific direction to all Trustees and personnel in relation to the duty of care of all Service Six members in promoting the well-being, and safeguarding from significant harm of all children, young people and vulnerable adults, including allegations against staff.

Senior Co-ordinating Manager

Chief Executive
Northamptonshire HQ
26 Rock Street
Wellingborough
Northamptonshire
NN8 4LW
Tel: 01933 277520

Others Involved In Implementing: Board of Trustees, Executive Team and Managers

Partner Agencies (e.g.):

NCC Initial Contact Team (ICT)

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCBN)

Monitoring Arrangements:

Annual unless legislation changes

Terminology:

The word whistleblowing in this Policy refers to the disclosure internally or externally by workers of malpractice, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work.

Policy Statement:

Service Six is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in public life and in all of its practice. To achieve these ends, it encourages freedom of speech. It also encourages staff to use internal mechanisms for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions by its employees or ex-employees.

This policy applies to all Trustees, employees, (including those designated as sessional or volunteers), and freelance contractors working for Service Six. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract or other such agreement with Service Six in their own premises.

Other policies and procedures

Service Six has a range of policies and procedures, which deal with standards of behaviour at work; they cover Discipline, Grievance, Harassment and Recruitment and Selection. Employees are encouraged to use the provisions of these procedures when appropriate. There may be times, however, when the matter is not about your personal employment position and needs to be handled in a different way. Examples may be:

- Malpractice or ill treatment of a client/customer by a senior member of staff or Trustee
- Repeated ill treatment of a client/customer, despite a complaint being made
- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- Suspected fraud
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety at work
- The environment has been, or is likely to be, damaged
- Breach of standing financial instructions
- Showing undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant
- A breach of a code of conduct
- Information on any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed

This list is not exhaustive.

Service Six will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures), and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Designated officers

The Designated Officer for Safeguarding & Whistleblowing is the Chief Executive.

Strategic Safeguarding Officer: Claudia Slabon (Chief Executive)

Tel: 01933 277520

Extension No: 211

Mobile: 07740 938190

claudiaslabon@servicesix.co.uk

The following other people have been nominated and agreed by Service Six as Designated Officers for concerns under this procedure. They will have direct access to the Chair of the Board of Trustees:

Emma Champion

Katie Marsh

Hayley Brown

Role of Designated Officer

Where concerns are not raised with the line manager, the Designated Officer being the Compliance Manager or in their absence or if an allegation is against them then the Chief Executive, will be the point of contact for employees who wish to raise concerns under the provisions of this policy. Where concerns are raised with him/her, he/she will arrange an initial interview, which will if requested be confidential, to ascertain the area of concern. At this stage, the whistleblower will be asked whether he/she wishes his/her identity to be disclosed and will be reassured about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation. He/she will also be asked whether or not he/she wishes to make a written or verbal statement. In either case, the designated officer will write a brief summary of the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.

Role of the Chief Executive

The Designated Officer will report to the Chief Executive, who will be responsible for the commission of any further investigation and will immediately advise the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Complaints about the Chief Executive or a member of the Board of Trustees

If exceptionally the concern is about the Chief Executive or a member of the Board of Trustees, the concern should be reported to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, who will decide on how the investigation will proceed. This may include an external investigation.

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Mrs Rachel Mallows

Tel. 01933 664437 (The Mallows Company HQ)

Email. rachel@rachelmallows.com

Please include the words 'Private & Confidential' in the subject box and on the main email text

The investigation

The investigation may need to be carried out under the terms of strict confidentiality i.e. by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so. This may be appropriate in cases of suspected fraud. In certain cases, however, such as allegations of ill treatment of clients/ customers, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of clients/customers is paramount in all cases.

The Designated Officer will offer to keep the whistleblower informed about the investigation and its outcome.

If the result of the investigation is that there is a case to be answered by any individual, the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure will be used and any other appropriate policy.

Where there is no case to answer, but the employee held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the Designated Officer should ensure that the employee suffers no reprisals.

Only where false allegations are made maliciously, will it be considered appropriate to act against the whistleblower under the terms of the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Inquiries

If the concern raised is very serious or complex, an internal or external inquiry may be held, as appropriate.

Following the investigation

The Chief Executive will brief the Designated Officer as to the outcome of the investigation. The Designated Officer will then arrange a meeting with the whistleblower to give feedback on any action taken. (This will not include details of any disciplinary action, which will remain confidential to the individual concerned). The feedback will be provided to the whistleblower within ten working days following the date of the closure of the investigation.

If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, Service Six recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive or where fully justified, elsewhere).

The Law

This policy and procedure has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, where those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions. The Act is incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996, which also already protects employees who take action over, or raise concerns about, health and safety at work.