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| PCC LOGO | Disclosure of Public interest matters (whistleblowing) policy |

Document Overview

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| **Purpose** | The purpose of this policy is to ensure that understand the process with regard to disclosing information that could be a public interest matter (Also known as Whistleblowing). This policy applies to all staff with a contract of employment. |
| **Confidentiality** | This document is not confidential. |
| **Document owner** |  |
| **Status note** | Draft/Final |
| **Distribution** | All PCC staff. |
| **Required action** |  |
| **Proposed next step** |  |

Version History

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| **Version** | **Date** | **Status Note** |
| 1 | 05.06.2023 | HR Template |
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1. Introduction
   1. We are committed to conducting the business of the Parish with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.
   2. Under certain circumstances, employees have legal protection if they make disclosures about an organisation for which they work. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is designed to protect employees from suffering any detriment at work as a result of making a disclosure (commonly called ‘whistle blowing’).
   3. The aims of this policy are:
      1. To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected,
      2. To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns,
      3. To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
2. Policy
   1. The qualifying circumstances are where the employee reasonably believes that the organisation or a person within the organisation commits, has committed or may in future commit, a ‘relevant failure’ in one or more of the following areas:
      1. committing a criminal offence.
      2. failing to comply with a legal obligation.
      3. a miscarriage of justice.
      4. endangering the health and safety of an individual.
      5. environmental damage.
      6. concealing any information relating to the above.
3. Procedure
   1. In the first instance concerns should be reported in complete confidence to the PCC/TRUSTEES/BOARD/CLERGY.
   2. The concern will be investigated and a response provided within 7 working days. In some circumstances whether due to the nature of the concern raised or nature of the investigation required, it may not be possible give a complete answer within 7 days in which case an interim response will be provided giving an indication as to when a full response will be available
   3. If no satisfactory response is provided within this time, or if the matter relates directly to any of these members of staff, the matter may be raised with a prescribed bodie detailed in this link through the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>.
   4. Employees have the right to raise concerns directly to an appropriate external organisation or authority but it is anticipated that steps 3.1 – 3.5 above will be followed before doing this. The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally and indeed it would be a most exceptional case where this would be necessary or justified.
   5. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential whistleblowing advice line (telephone number 0207 404 6609) for employees who are unsure whether or how to raise a public interest concern. If you do call this line, you should ensure that you have a copy of this policy with you at the time.
4. General Notes
   1. Employees are encouraged to use the procedure if they are concerned about any wrongdoing at work. Misuse of the procedure (e.g. for personal or malicious reasons) will be investigated and dealt with under the Company’s disciplinary procedure.
   2. This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use our Grievance Procedure (Appendix 5), Equal Opportunity or Positive Work Environment policies as appropriate. (Appendix 4).