



Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Hazelwood ARC expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees and will treat seriously any concern that an employee may have about illegal or improper conduct. This procedure applies to all employees, apprentices, workers and anyone else who has a contract to carry out work with Hazelwood ARC personally. Employees will be expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of Sophie Scott and Lesley-Anne Repper, any serious impropriety or breach of procedure. Employees may seek advice from one of the following sources if they feel unable to follow the internal procedure: The Whistleblowing Helpline (tel 08000 724725 or email enquiries@wbhelpline.org.uk); 'Protect' (formerly Public Concern at Work) (tel 020 3117 2520, <https://protect-advice.org.uk>); or The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (tel. 0800 028 0285 email help@nspcc.org.uk). Employees who do not follow the steps identified in this procedure or other agreed internal procedures, and take their concerns to other outside sources (e.g. the press), may be subject to a formal disciplinary investigation.

What is the purpose of this procedure?

This procedure is designed to enable all Hazelwood ARC employees to notify the relevant person (Sophie Scott or Lesley-Anne Repper) of any reasonable suspicion of illegal or improper conduct. Where the concerns are about safeguarding children or young people, the centre's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection should be notified. It is a procedure in which the line manager or Director will be expected to act swiftly and constructively in the investigation of any concerns in accordance with Hazelwood ARC Disciplinary Procedure. Concern about a colleague's professional capability should not be dealt with using this procedure.

When should it be used?

This procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the Grievance and Complaints Procedure, which should be used where an employee is only aggrieved about his/her own situation. Employees who are worried about wrongdoing at work do not necessarily have a personal grievance. Employees must act in good faith and must have reasonable grounds for believing the information to be accurate. No employee who uses this procedure in good faith will be penalised for doing so. Hazelwood ARC will not tolerate harassment and/or victimisation of any employee raising concerns. An employee who is not sure whether the conduct he/she is concerned about does constitute illegal or improper conduct or is unsure about how to proceed can contact Sophie Scott for advice. Financial regulations require any employee who suspects fraud, corruption or other financial irregularity to ensure this is reported for possible investigation. Normally you must first report any suspicion of such an irregularity to an Sophie Scott.

Mechanism for raising concerns

Where the issue concerns your line manager, if having made your report, you believe he/she has failed to take appropriate action, then you should bring it to the attention of Sophie Scott, Director. The complainant will be asked to do this in writing. It will, therefore, be helpful to note down any facts and dates as they happen. Employees who want to use the procedure but feel uneasy about it may wish to consult their trade union initially. Where anonymity is requested, efforts will be made to meet the request where appropriate, but that might not always be possible. The earlier and more open the expression of concern the easier it will be to take appropriate action. Each case will be investigated thoroughly with the aim of informing the complainant of the outcome of any investigation as quickly as possible. While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

Examples of illegal and/or improper conduct that are addressed by this policy

- Fraudulent or improper use of Hazelwood ARC's or the Centres money or assets
- Dangerous practices at work
- Corruptly receiving any gift or advantage, thus failing to comply with the Bribery Act 2010
- Allowing private interests to override the interests of Hazelwood ARC
- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligations
- Damage to the environment, or

- The deliberate concealment of information concerning any of the matters listed above

Safeguarding children and young people

All employees have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of students. Concerns about any of the following should be reported to the Centre's Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection (DSL):

- physical abuse of a student
- sexual abuse of a student
- emotional abuse of a student
- neglect of a student
- an intimate or improper relationship between an adult and a student

The reason for the concern may be the actions of a colleague (including a more senior colleague), a volunteer, a visitor, a trustee, another student or someone outside the centre. Whatever the reason, concerns must be reported.

Actions we may take

If you reasonably believe that the nature of your concern relates to any of the areas set out above and you disclose this information to the appropriate person under this policy in good faith, no action will be taken against you for making the disclosure. We will, however, take appropriate action against any person found to be:

- victimising another person for using this procedure (please tell Sophie Scott if you think you have been victimised, or raise it formally under the Grievance and Complaints procedure if the matter is not remedied);
- deterring any person from reporting genuine concerns under this procedure (please tell Sophie Scott if you think you have been deterred, and raise it formally under the Grievance and Complaints procedure if the matter is not remedied), or
- making a disclosure/allegation maliciously, vexatiously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain. For employees, this action may involve us taking disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

Person to contact:

Sophie Scott

sophie@hazelwood-arc.co.uk