

Society of the Sacred Heart CIO

England Wales Province

Charity Number: 1179288



Raising Concerns at Work / Whistle-blowing Policy

Document Title:	Raising Concerns at Work / Whistle-blowing Policy
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Date Ratified:	November 2025
Review Date:	November 2027

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Policy Statement

Whistleblowing is the term used when someone who works for an employer raises a concern about bad practice, or risk, for example to a person's safety, wrongdoing which harms, or creates risk to harm, to people who use the service, colleagues or the wider public.

This organisation's policy on whistleblowing sets out to comply, in every aspect, with the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998* in protecting and not victimising employees who seek to report, and who have investigated genuine and reasonable concerns about any form of malpractice that they encounter in their work.

At the same time, the Society aims to create an atmosphere of open communication and commitment to high standards of work, within which criticisms can be frankly made and thoroughly investigated.

1 Speak up, we will listen

Speaking up about any concerns you have at work is really important. In fact, it's vital because it will help the Society to keep improving services for all Sisters and the working environment for employees.

You may feel worried about raising a concern, and we understand this but please don't be put off. In accordance with our duty of candour, our senior management are committed to an open and honest culture. We will look into what you say and you will always have access to the support you need.

The Policy

This document outlines the Society's policy for responding to allegations or reports of abuse, and other forms of misconduct, made by one or more employees against other employee(s). These actions are known as whistleblowing.

The requirement for such a policy arises because it was previously the case that management in some organisations considered individuals involved in whistleblowing as trouble-makers. It is now legally recognised that an employee who is in a position to observe and report bad



practice should be enabled to do so without fear of repercussions on their conduct and career prospects. Indeed, failure to report malpractice could lead to accusations of colluding in it, and therefore of being guilty of misconduct.

Obligations on Employees to Report Abuse

The Society requires all its employees to report diligently on anything that causes them concern. We believe that teamwork and loyalty to colleagues should not be allowed to deter employees from reporting suspected abuse, criminal acts, and neglect of residents or bad practice. Any employee who witnesses or suspects abuse by another employee should report it as soon as possible to their line manager. The manager will accept responsibility for the actions that follow and will assure the whistle-blower that they have acted correctly by reporting the matter and that they will not be victimised.

Despite the assurances given, we accept that there may be incidents that an employee does not feel confident enough or able to report in the first instance to the manager. Where this is not appropriate or considered too sensitive the staff member should report to the HR advisor or other senior manager.

Investigating and Dealing with Allegations

The manager to whom abuse by an employee is reported should take the necessary steps under the Safeguarding Policy. In addition, they should also protect the source of the information, if possible. If a manager fails to act promptly, suppresses evidence, or is involved in any action to discourage whistleblowing, they may render themselves liable to disciplinary action.

Dealing with Interference with or Victimisation of an employee who has Reported Abuse

Any employee who attempts to prevent another employee from reporting their concerns to a manager, or who bullies, attempts to intimidate or discriminates against a colleague in these circumstances will be dealt with under disciplinary proceedings. A whistle-blower who feels themselves to be subject to hostile action from colleagues should inform their manager, who should, if necessary, take steps to alter the employee's duties so as to protect them from the



hostile action.

What Concerns can be Raised?

Risk, wrongdoing and bad practice which you believe is harming the service we deliver should be raised as a concern. Some examples are;

- unsafe care
- unsafe working conditions
- inadequate induction or training
- lack of or a poor response to reported incidents
- bullying culture

This list is not exhaustive.

Proof is not required; we encourage you to raise the matter while it is a concern. It does not matter if you turn out to be mistaken as long as you are genuinely troubled.

Unjustified Reporting

The Society's managers take reports from whistle-blowers seriously and investigates all allegations thoroughly. Any allegations against colleagues that are found to be merely flippant or malicious may render the accuser liable to disciplinary action and criminal proceedings.

Confidentiality

We want you to feel comfortable raising your concerns openly but we also appreciate that you may want to raise it confidentially. This means that while you are willing for your identity to be known to the person you report your concern to, you do not want anyone else to know your identity, therefore we will keep your identity confidential unless required to disclose it by law. You can choose to raise your concern anonymously without giving anyone your name but that may make it more difficult to investigate thoroughly and give you feedback on the outcome.

Contact details

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Reviewed 2025