

Whistleblowing Policy



Children's Respite Trust is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. If a member of staff discovers evidence of malpractice or wrongdoing within the Centre, they can disclose this information internally without fear of reprisal. Our

Whistleblowing policy is intended to cover concerns such as:

- Financial malpractice or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Dangers to health and safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour

This policy should not be used to question business decisions made by the Centre, or to raise any matters that are covered under other policies (eg discrimination or racial harassment). Any allegations relating to child protection will follow the procedures set out in the **Safeguarding** policy. Any concerns relating to the employment conditions of an individual member of staff should be raised according to the procedures set out in the **Staff Grievance**. This will be found in the **staff handbook**.

Raising a concern

Ideally the staff member should put his or her allegations in writing, setting out the background to the situation, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why they are concerned about the situation. In the first instance concerns should be taken to the **DSL** (Designated Safeguarding Lead) **Michelle Hulse – Head of Care or Verity Morris – U5's Manager**.

If this person or body is unwilling or unable to act on the concern, the staff member should then raise it with:

- Ofsted (if it concerns the safe and effective running of the Centre)
- The Local Authority Designated Officer through **SPoA** (Single Point of Advice) or the Local Safeguarding Children Board (if it concerns a child protection issue and is not already covered by the procedure set out in the Centre's **Safeguarding policy**)
- Ultimately, with the police (if a crime is thought to have been committed).

If the member of staff is still uncertain about how to proceed with the concern, he or she can contact the whistle-blowing charity PCAW (Public Concern at Work) for advice.

Responding to a concern

Initial enquiries will usually involve a meeting with the individual raising the concern, and will decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. If a concern relates to issues which fall within the scope of other policies, it will be addressed under those policies.

If the initial meeting does not resolve the concern, further investigation is required. The appropriate person will investigate the concerns thoroughly, ensuring that a written response can be provided within ten working days where feasible, or if this is not possible, giving a date

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by which the final response can be expected. The response should include details of how the matter was investigated, conclusions drawn from the investigation, and who to contact if the member of staff is unhappy with the response and wishes to take the matter further.

Rights and responsibilities of the whistle-blower

All concerns will be treated in confidence, and the Centre will make every effort not to reveal the identity of anyone raising a concern in good faith. At the appropriate time, however, the member of staff may need to come forward as a witness.

If a member of staff raises a concern in good faith which is then not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that person.

If the investigation concludes that the member of staff maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that person.

Contact information

LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board)

Online referral form: <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/children-families/professional-resources/allegations/referrals/form-lado-referral>

Out of hours: Emergency Duty Service on 01273 335906 or 01273 335905

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231

PCAW (Public Concern at Work): 020 7404 6609 (website: www.pcaw.org.uk)

Contacting the SPoA

Telephone: **01323 464 222**

Monday to Thursday 8.30 am to 5 pm and Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Out of hours:

Telephone: **01273 335 906** or **01273 335 905**

Contact our Emergency Duty Service (EDS) with serious concerns that cannot wait until the next working day.

EDS operates Monday to Thursday 5 pm to 8.30 am and

Fridays, weekends, and bank holidays, 4.30 pm to 8.30 am.

Email: webspoa@eastsussex.gov.uk

This policy was adopted by: Michelle Hulse	Date: 18/09/2024
To be reviewed: September 2026	Signed: <i>M Hulse</i>