



Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Objective of this policy

Churchcentral (CC) is committed to conducting our operations with integrity and honesty and we expect all our staff and volunteers to maintain high standards in accordance with our policies and procedures. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time. A culture of openness and accountability is important to us and essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur.

The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage you to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible - knowing that your concerns will be taken seriously, investigated as appropriate and confidentiality will be respected.
- To provide you with guidance on how to raise concerns.
- To reassure you that should you raise a concern, you should be able to do so without fear of reprisal.

2. Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all of CC's activities and covers all personnel, including those permanently employed; temporary staff; contractors; trustees; agents; volunteers; and consultants.

The Whistleblowing Policy is not intended to replace existing procedures:

- If an employee's concern relates to their own treatment as an employee, they should raise it under the existing grievance or harassment procedures
- If someone receiving support from CC has a concern about services provided, they should raise those concerns with CC as a complaint.

3. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing. This may include:

- Breach of legal requirement - e.g. Health and safety obligations
- General malpractice – such as immoral, illegal or unethical conduct
- Gross misconduct
- Breach of CC's policies

If you have any genuine concerns related to any of the above, you should report it under this policy. If you have concerns and you are not sure whether it is appropriate to raise them under this policy please talk to your line manager, an elder or the Company Secretary.

4. Protected Disclosures

An individual making a 'protected disclosure' is given statutory protection from victimisation under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA), provided the disclosure is in the public interest.

A 'protected disclosure' is any disclosure of information which in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure tends to show that one or more of the following has been committed.

- A criminal offense
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Putting someone's health and safety in danger
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealing of information relating to the above

5. Raising a whistleblowing concern

All whistleblowing concerns will be treated as confidential and should be reported to an elder or the Company Secretary on - tim@churchcentral.org.uk or office@churchcentral.org.uk.

You should make it clear that you are making your disclosure within the terms of the church's whistleblowing policy. This will ensure that the recipient of the disclosure realises this and takes the necessary action to investigate the disclosure and to protect the whistleblower's identity. The company secretary will seek to keep you informed of the investigation as appropriate. However the need for confidentiality may prohibit us from giving specific details of the investigation or action taken.

You should treat any information you are given about the investigation as confidential.

The individual designated to investigate will respond to concerns as quickly as possible. An initial enquiry may be carried out to decide whether a full investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

Where appropriate, the matters raised may be:

- investigated by management or through the disciplinary grievance process
- referred to the police
- referred to the external auditor
- referred and put through established child protection procedures
- subject of an independent inquiry.

Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the person investigating the concern will write to the individual:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- indicating how the church proposes to deal with the matter
- informing them of whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

6. Support of Whistleblowers

We understand that it could be worrying to raise concerns, due to fears of possible repercussions. We seek to encourage openness and will support you should you raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

If you are concerned that your identity might be revealed, you should highlight this to the Chair of Directors or the Company Secretary; who will take any appropriate measures to secure your anonymity. We are not accountable if you choose to tell others of the alleged misdemeanour.

7. Where can I get independent advice?

You can contact the independent Public Concern at Work for free and receive independent and confidential advice. The charity runs a UK helpline on 020 7404 6609.