

“Whistleblowing” Policy and Procedure

Statement of Intent

Little Acorns is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. We encourage all employees and others with serious concerns about any aspect of work to come forward and voice those concerns (but not complaints made maliciously). Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong. However, they may not feel able to express their concerns because they believe that speaking up would be disloyal. There should be no fear harassment or victimisation. It is always best not to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

Any concern should be shared with either Michelle Tuddenham or Val Duffy. This document makes it clear that staff can do so without fear of reprisals. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to encourage and enable staff to raise serious concerns within Little Acorns rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.

Aims

This policy aims to;

- Provide avenues for you to raise concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Allow you to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with Little Acorns response.
- Reassure you that you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for Whistleblowing in good faith.

This Whistleblowing policy covers concern that;

- Are unlawful.
- Fall below established standards.
- Amount to impropriety.
- Or place the health or safety of any person at risk.

How to raise a concern

As a first step you should raise your concerns with Michelle Tuddenham or Val Duffy.

Concerns are better raised in writing as well as verbally.

You should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates, place where the incident/s occurs and why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for your concern.

You may invite a third party to raise a matter on your behalf.

How Little Acorns will respond

The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. The matters raised may;

- Be investigated internally.
- Be referred to officers at Bracknell Forest
- Be referred to the Police
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry.

Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

When any meeting is arranged, you have the right, if you so wish, to be accompanied by someone who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates. Finally, you will receive information about the outcomes of any investigations.