



Voices in Exile

Whistleblowing (including Employment Rights Act 2025 changes) policy

Reviewed April 2026	Version: 2
Date due for review: April 2028	Amendments: Stronger whistleblowing protections • Sexual harassment disclosures now explicitly covered • Workers gain protection from detriment/dismissal when reporting

Purpose

This policy and procedure is intended to support a commitment to having a workplace which is free from harassment and bullying and to ensure that all staff members, contractors and, others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity and respect regardless of gender, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital or family status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, creed, culture, religion or belief, age, or disability.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is central to ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all current staff members, whether full or part-time, temporary or fixed-term.

Definition

Whistleblowing is the name given to the act of the disclosure of information to the employer or the relevant authority by an individual who knows, or suspects, that the Organisation is responsible for, or has taken part in, some wrongdoing.

Those making qualifying disclosures are protected against dismissal or detriment by The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Qualifying disclosures

Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as “qualifying disclosures.” A “qualifying disclosure” means a disclosure of information that you genuinely and reasonably believe is in the public interest and shows that the Organisation has committed a “relevant failure” by:

- committing a criminal offence
- failing to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- endangering the health and safety of an individual
- sexual harassment (unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- environmental damage
- concealing any information relating to the above.

These acts can be in the past, present or future, eg a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. The Organisation will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who “blow the whistle”, where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur. The disclosure has to be “in the public interest.” We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

Should the concern not meet the requirement to be a qualifying disclosure, you should raise this under Voices in Exile’s grievance policy. Where a concern is raised under the whistleblowing policy where it is not appropriate to do so, ie it relates to a personal grievance, the receiving manager will confirm that the matter will be addressed under the grievance policy.

The procedure

In the first instance, you should report any concerns you may have to your line manager. Where the concern relates to your line manager or it is not appropriate to make the report to your line manager, you should report your concerns to the Director or another senior manager. All concerns reported will be treated in the utmost confidence.

If you do not report your concerns to a senior manager you should take them direct to the appropriate organisation or regulatory body with authority for that area.

Following receipt of a disclosure made under this policy, an investigation meeting will be held. The purpose of this meeting is to gather as much information as possible from you regarding your concerns, including whether you have any supporting evidence or can identify any witnesses.

This meeting will be held within 10 working days following receipt of the disclosure.

After this meeting, the investigating manager will commence a full investigation into the concerns raised. The investigation will aim to gather all relevant information, including relevant documentary evidence or witness statements.

This investigation must be completed within 3 weeks following receipt of the disclosure. If this is not possible, the investigating manager will speak to you in advance of the completion deadline to agree an extended period of investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, the investigation manager will write to you confirming the outcome.

If you are not satisfied with the explanation or outcome, you may raise the matter with the Chair of the Board of Trustees or the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body.

Formal action

Should formal action be required as a result of any disclosure made under this policy, this action will be carried out in accordance with the applicable internal policy. Any potential sanctions imposed will be fair and reasonable in line with the relevant policy.

Protection against detrimental treatment

Everyone who raises matters of concern under this policy are protected against detrimental treatment, up to and including dismissal, because they have made a disclosure.

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.