

Cornwall Faith Forum ("CFF") Policy Refugee Community Link Project

1. Definition

- 1.1 All organisations face the risk of things going wrong or of unknowingly harbouring malpractice. Cornwall Faith Forum ("CFF") positively encourages staff, volunteers and members of the organisation to raise worries or concerns. With this in mind it is important that all people are aware that at CFF:
- a) instances of malpractice will be taken seriously;
 - b) all confidentiality is to be respected for those employees and volunteers who raise concerns and that it is possible to raise these concerns outside the line management structure or normal lines of communication;
 - c) penalties exist for those making false and malicious allegations. These may follow the procedures outlined in the disciplinary procedure;
 - d) any concerns about malpractice should normally be raised with the project manager or a CFF Trustee and subsequently followed up in writing and addressed to the person to whom the original concern was brought.

2. What is a Whistleblower?

- 2.1 The term is used to describe someone who becomes aware of a serious problem and then raises this matter so that it can be investigated and corrected. The sorts of problems covered could include:
- a) financial fraud or malpractice;
 - b) other types of corruption;
 - c) attempts to cover up earlier problems;
 - d) abuse or neglect of vulnerable people;
 - e) failure to deliver proper standards of teaching or service;
 - f) damaging conflicts at senior level;
 - g) bullying, harassment or victimisation in the organisation at any level.

3. Why have a policy?

- a) CFF's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the organisation has an effective policy that will ensure concerns are properly raised and expressed. This will then encourage a culture of openness and accountability;
- b) reassure employees, volunteers and those we are supporting that they will not be victimised;
- c) deter fraud and malpractice;
- d) identify and help to resolve damaging personal conflicts;
- e) avoid public criticism and the need to manage a crisis.

4. Confidential Reporting

- 4.1 CFF believes firmly that all should be able to follow their sense of right and wrong. We believe that through consultation we will continue to develop procedures and practices to do with confidential reporting.
- 4.2 CFF believes that the behaviours listed in 2.1 above are not acceptable and have an impact on the organisation, its employees, volunteers and those we are supporting.
- 4.3 If a problem is raised then it will always be fully investigated and managed fairly.
- 4.4 If it is preferred, then reports can be made with a colleague or friend.
- 4.5 CFF will support concerned employees, volunteers or those being supported and will protect them from reprisals or victimisation.
- 4.6 CFF will do everything that it can to respect confidentiality but employees and volunteers have to be made aware that under certain conditions, confidentiality cannot be kept, but CFF will ensure that only relevant people are told.
- 4.7 No attempts should be made to discourage, victimise or criticise anyone from raising concerns.

5. Whom to contact

- 5.1 In the vast majority of cases the correct procedure for raising concerns is through the project manager for employees and volunteers. However, in particular circumstances, employees and volunteers should speak to the CFF Chairman or other member of the CFF Trustees asking them for a confidential meeting.
- 5.2 Employees and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in CFF's safeguarding regime. In the first instance, the employee/volunteer should raise the matter with the Project Manager or CFF Chairman.
- 5.3 There may be exceptional cases where it might be best to contact the Trustees e.g. if the problem involves the Project Manager. To do this the concern should be sent to the Chairman.

6. Dealing with concerns

- 6.1 Anyone raising concerns needs to be aware that such issues will need to be fully investigated by CFF. CFF needs to treat with absolute fairness both the person raising the concern and also any others who might be involved.
- 6.2 Anyone raising issues will be informed of, if they request it, the results of any investigation which has taken place and of any proposed action which might result, except in the case of Child Protection issues. However, in doing this CFF also will have to respect the confidentiality of others.
- 6.3 Abuse of this reporting system by maliciously raising unfounded allegations will result in very serious action being taken. No-one coming forward in good faith has anything to fear.

7. Staff training

- 7.1 All new staff are introduced to whistleblowing procedures as part of the formal induction process.
- 7.2 Employees and volunteers are also reminded of procedures annually.
- 7.3 Support and guidance can be offered to staff by the Project Manager.

8. External Procedures

- 8.1 Where all internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff/volunteer shall have a right of access to Children, Schools and Families Complaints Manager, Cornwall Council, Room 440, New County Hall, Truro TR1 3AY.
- 8.2 It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where a member of staff/volunteer may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the employee reasonably believes:
 - a) that exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
 - b) that CFF would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
 - c) where they believe they would be victimised by CFF;
 - d) where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

9. Whistleblowing and Child Protection/Safeguarding

Should anyone have concerns about the management of child or vulnerable adult protection or safeguarding within CFF or about the systems in place to deal with these, they have a duty to ensure that this is raised. This may include concerns about attitudes or actions. This concern can be raised with the CFF Chairman.

10. Contact Details

- The nominated Whistleblowing person for the CFF Refugee Community Link Project is Anna Corbett, Chair, Oversight Group for the CFF Refugee Community Link Project, who can be contacted by email anna@tormark.co.uk tel. 07976037641.

A member of staff/volunteer with safeguarding concerns regarding children and vulnerable adults practice in CFF has a responsibility to contact one or more of the people identified above.