



Volunteer Whistleblowing Policy

Overview

As a Community Interest Company, we aim to meet all our legal obligations and maintain the highest standards of integrity, honesty, and professionalism. We know that occasionally this might not happen. If this is the case, we want to make it as easy as possible for people to raise any concerns or suspicions they have about the organisation, our staff, Board, or other volunteers. This policy explains what volunteers should do if they have any concerns they would like to raise. It also gives a general outline of the law in this area. It is for guidance purposes only and should not be regarded as a full explanation of the law.

Protected Disclosure

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, PIDA for short, you have the legal right to share any concerns about the organisation without fear of victimisation or being harmed. In the unlikely event this happens we will make sure you are not victimized or affected by your whistle blowing. You must reasonably believe that the event has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen soon.

The concerns covered by PIDA relate to one or more of the events in the list below:

- a criminal offence like fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, including theft, fraud, or malpractice
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- trying to cover up of any of the above.

Who to talk to

If you believe that one of the above events has happened, is happening or is likely to happen in the near future, you should raise the issue with your local service Manager. If this is inappropriate, you may also raise your concerns directly with the ECS Managing Director.

We will let you know who will investigate your concerns and advise you how long the investigation will take. You may be asked to put your concerns in writing, provide as much information and evidence as possible, and attend further meetings as part of the investigation.

You can be accompanied to any meeting you attend in connection with the investigation. We will do our best to maintain confidentiality where possible, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Depending on the nature of the complaint, the police, or a regulator for example, may need to be involved. Although you may raise your concerns anonymously, it may not be possible to investigate or take further action if you do so. If you feel that the person with whom you first raised your concern has failed to deal with the issue in the right manner, you should set out your concerns in writing and give them to the Managing Director or ECS Board.

Except in exceptional circumstances, you should not share your concerns outside the organisation unless you have first provided us with the chance to deal with the problem. This includes talking to



anyone from the media. If you feel that you are unable to raise your concerns within the organisation, you may consider raising them with an appropriate authority, for example:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- Healthwatch England
- the Office of Fair Trading
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Environment Agency

However, we hope and expect that most concerns raised are solved internally to everyone's satisfaction. People will not be protected by this policy if they tell us something that they know is not true. If this happens, they may be subject to legal action.

You can contact the Managing Director by calling 07776090003 or emailing contactus@weareecs.co.uk

If you have questions relating to this policy, then please contact your local volunteering coordinator.