



WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Birmingham Diocesan Trust ("the Trust") is a registered charity; Registered Charity No. 234216 and as such is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between Trustees, employees/volunteers, post-holders, beneficiaries and with other partner organisations.

1.2 The Trust, its Trustees, employees/volunteers and post-holders are committed to:

- conducting themselves ethically, with honesty and integrity;
- the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability;
- good practice and high standards regardless of their role; and
- being supportive of each other.

1.3 This policy aims to help individuals to raise with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result any serious concerns (including safeguarding issues) they may have about post-holders, colleagues, their employer, or with how the Trust operates.

2. POLICY SCOPE

2.1 This policy is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects individuals who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

2.2 The policy covers serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as:

- a criminal offence;
- a safeguarding issue;
- a failure to comply with any legal or regulatory obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- health and safety risks;
- damage to the environment (or its concealment);
- fraud or corruption;
- Safeguarding issue; and
- unauthorised use/misuse of the Trust's finances or other resources.

3. APPLICATION

3.1 It is not necessary for individuals who raise the concern to prove the wrongdoing that is alleged.

3.2 However, if an individual knowingly or maliciously makes an untrue allegation (e.g. in order to cause disruption), the Trust will take appropriate disciplinary action against them.

3.3 Individuals should note that they will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

3.4 This policy should not be used when the issue relates to an employment issue. These issues should be dealt with through the Trust's Grievance Procedure.

3.5 Volunteers should make complaints or raise concerns through the process contained within the Volunteering Policy.

4. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

4.1 The officer designated to handle whistleblowing concerns is Gerry Dryden, Human Resources and Communications Director, his contact details are:

Email: Gerry.dryden@rc-birmingham.org

Tel: 0121 230 6224

Mobile: 074 9643 9043

4.1.1 If the Human Resources & Communications Director is unavailable or absent the Chief Operating Officer should be contacted.

4.1.2 If the issue relates to the Human Resources & Communications Director it should, in the first instance be raised with David Brooks, the Chief Operating Officer (see contact details below):

Email: David.brooks@rc-birmingham.org

Tel: 0121 230 6218

Mobile: 077 2119 6418

4.2 Individuals should in most cases, report their concern to their immediate line manager, which in the majority of cases will be the relevant Parish Priest. If the relevant manager cannot deal with the issue, he or she should refer their concern to the Human Resources & Communications Director.

4.3 Dependent on the seriousness and sensitivity of the concern, it can be raised directly with the Human Resources & Communications Director.

4.4 Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns in writing where possible, setting out the background and history of their concerns (giving names, dates and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for their concerns.

4.5 Post-holders, employees or volunteers may wish to seek the assistance of a colleague (which might be a representative from their trade union – if they are member of one) before raising the concern. Their colleague may, where the employee or the volunteer so desires, raise the concern on their behalf. The post-holder, employee or the volunteer may also invite their colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews about the concerns they have raised.

4.6 If any individual is unsure whether to use this procedure or they want independent advice at any stage, they can contact Protect, an independent charity that specialise in supporting individuals with potential [whistle-blowing] concerns. Protect can be contact either via their website or on 020 3117 2520.

4.7 Disclosures made to a legal advisor in the course of obtaining legal advice will be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

4.8 If the individual reasonably believes that the matter relates wholly or mainly to the conduct of a person or body other than the Trust or any other matter for which a person or body other than the Trust has legal responsibility, the disclosure should be made to that other person or body.

5. PROTECTING THE INDIVIDUAL RAISING THE CONCERN

5.1 If an individual raises a concern which they believe to be true, the Trust will take appropriate action to protect the individual from any harassment, victimisation or bullying. Post-holders, employees or volunteers who raise a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their post, job or being asked to leave their voluntary role, nor will it influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures (employees only).

5.2 The matter will be treated confidentially if the individual requests this and their name or position will be not be revealed without their permission unless the Trust has to do so by law. If, in other circumstances, the concern cannot be resolved without revealing the individual's identity, the Human Resources & Communications Director will discuss with the individual whether they wish to proceed.

6. HOW THE TRUST WILL DEAL WITH THE CONCERN

6.1 How the concern is dealt with will depend on what it involves. If further enquiries and/or investigation are required the Human Resources & Communications, or the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or another individual such as an external auditor or an independent investigator will be tasked to investigate the concern.

6.2 It may be necessary subsequently for the individual raising the concern to give evidence in disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

6.3 The Trust will give the individual feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

6.4 If the suspicions are not proven by an investigation, the matter will be closed. Post-holders, employees or volunteers will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and their confidentiality will continue to be protected.

7. APPLICATION

7.1 Queries/questions regarding the application of this policy should, in the first instance be directed to the Trust's Human Resources & Communications Director.

VERSION CONTROL			
Primary Location	Policy title	Version No.	Next Review date
Website	Raising Concerns at Work (Whistle-blowing) Policy	2	March 2022
Policy owner		Human Resources & Communications Director	
Related Policies		Grievance, Disciplinary	
Stakeholder		All Trustees, post-holders, employees, of the Archdiocese of Birmingham	
VERSION HISTORY			
Version No.	Date	Created/amended by (Name & job title)	Amendment
1	March 2016	Gerry Dryden, Director of HR	New policy
2	February 2019	Gerry Dryden, HR & Communications Director	Policy updated/amended following review.