

This policy applies to all trustees, employees, and volunteers.

Other individuals, including our contractors, subcontractors and suppliers are also encouraged to follow the procedure set out in this policy.

If your concern relates to a personal grievance that is not in the public interest (for example, an allegation of bullying or harassment, or an allegation that your contract of employment has been breached), you should raise it under our Complaints Procedure.

If you are unsure about whether your concerns are best dealt with under the whistleblowing policy or other procedure, please speak to the CEO for further advice.

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting suspected wrongdoing or risk of wrongdoing relating to:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- an attempt to cover up any of the above.

It is not necessary for you to prove the wrongdoing. However, to be protected by whistleblowing laws against detrimental treatment or dismissal, you must reasonably believe that wrongdoing (related to one of the categories listed above) is being, has been, or is likely to be committed and that your disclosure is in the public interest.

An individual has no responsibility for investigating the matter – it is the responsibility of KidsBank Chester to ensure that an investigation takes place. We encourage you to raise your concerns under this procedure in the first instance. If you are unsure whether to raise a concern, you should discuss the issue with the CEO.

Principles

Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Employees and others working on behalf of KidsBank Chester should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.

Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the issue.

No employee or other person working on behalf of KidsBank Chester will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.

Victimisation of an individual for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.

If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure our disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.

An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. You should report the matter to the CEO.

What to do if you have a genuine concern relating to any type of wrongdoing

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of your own contract of employment. Matters relating to your contract of employment, should be raised via our Complaints Procedure.

Raising a whistleblowing concern

If you have a genuine concern relating to any type of wrongdoing that is covered under this policy, you should raise it with the CEO. If your concern relates to the CEO, or for any reason you do not wish to approach the CEO, you should raise your complaint with the Chair of Trustees.

You can raise your concern orally, or in writing. It is important that you set out clearly:

- the details of the suspected wrongdoing.
- the names of any individuals involved; and
- and what action (if any) you are seeking.

In some cases, it may be necessary to ask you to attend a meeting to clarify the nature of your concern. This will be arranged as soon as possible. You may, if you wish, bring a colleague or a trade union representative with you to the meeting.

Responding to your whistleblowing concern

The CEO or Chair, to whom you raised your concern will decide if an investigation is required and, if it is, the most appropriate person to conduct it. The CEO or Chair to whom you raised your concern, will write to you confirming that they are conducting an investigation and the timescale for completion.

The level of investigation and time this will take will vary depending on the nature of the suspected wrongdoing.

Following the investigation, the CEO or Chair to whom you raised your concern, will inform you in writing, as quickly as possible after completion of the investigation, of the outcome and any next steps or action that will be taken. While we aim to provide you with comprehensive feedback, in some cases this may not be possible, for example where data protection rules apply or there are sensitive issues that need to remain confidential.

How to contact us

You can email the CEO at dee@kidsbankchester.com

You can email the Chair of Trustees at mick@kidsbankchester.com

You can also write to us at: KidsBank, 21-23 Garden Lane, Chester, CH1 4EU.

What if our response does not satisfy you?

If you are not satisfied with how your concern has been dealt with by the CEO, you should appeal to the Chair of Trustees.

You can raise your appeal orally, or in writing. It is important that you set out clearly the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you consider that your original concern has not been satisfactorily dealt with.

In some cases, it may be necessary to ask you to attend a meeting to clarify the nature of your appeal. This will be arranged as soon as possible. You may, if you wish, bring a colleague or a trade union representative with you to the meeting.

The Chair of Trustees will consider your grounds for appeal and review the manner in which your original whistleblowing concern was handled. You will be informed in writing of the outcome as quickly as possible.

You should escalate the matter to the Chair of Trustees if you are concerned that the CEO

- is involved in the wrongdoing
- has failed to make a proper investigation
- or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant person.

The Chair of Trustees will arrange for a review of the investigation to be carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make their own report to the Board.

You should escalate the matter to the Charity Commission if you are concerned that the Board of Trustees are also:

- involved in the wrongdoing
- failed to make a proper investigation

- or failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant person.

Further advice on how to do this can be found [here](#).

Raising your whistleblowing concerns externally

We encourage you to raise your whistleblowing concerns internally in the first instance. If you feel that appropriate action has not been taken, you should report the matter to the correct prescribed body or person (see list on [GOV.UK](#)).

You should seek advice if you are thinking of raising your concern with the media as you will not have protection under whistleblowing laws unless certain conditions are met.

Further guidance

If you need further guidance or support, you can contact the whistleblowing charity [Protect](#) or [Citizens Advice](#) for free confidential advice.

Confidentiality and anonymity

We want you to feel comfortable about raising a whistleblowing concern openly and actively encourage you to do so.

Where you raise a whistleblowing concern openly, we will maintain your confidentiality as far as possible. If we need to identify your identity to anyone, we will notify you beforehand.

We encourage anonymous reporting over remaining silent. Although we will investigate any concern that is reported anonymously as best we can, an anonymous report is likely to be more difficult for us to investigate and we will not be in a position to provide you with any feedback.

Our commitment to you

You have the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment (including being unfairly penalised, disciplined or dismissed) because you have raised a whistleblowing concern.

If you raise a whistleblowing concern in accordance with this policy, we will ensure that you are treated with respect and provided with adequate support and protection.

If you are told not to raise or pursue a whistleblowing concern, or you believe that you have been subjected to detrimental treatment because you have raised a whistleblowing concern, you should report the matter under the Complaints Procedure. Any such behaviour will not be tolerated and will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

If we find that an individual has knowingly raised false allegations, this will also be treated as a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure.

Data protection

When an individual makes a disclosure, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time. The Board of Trustees will review this policy and employees will be notified of any change to it and the effective date of that change.