

20.20 Whistle Blowing Policy

Shetland Islands CAB recognises that our staff and board of directors will very often be the first to see or suspect misconduct or wrongdoing. While very often it may be innocent, it could turn out to constitute some form of malpractice, which should therefore be reported and investigated.

We wish to encourage all of our employees, volunteers and directors to keep their eyes open and to raise such concerns in a sound way to demonstrate and ensure good practice in all our activities.

Shetland Islands CAB wishes to make it clear to our clients, our staff, our funders and the local community that those who attempt to defraud us or who are reckless about our good reputation will be dealt with appropriately.

For the purposes of this policy, we consider that examples of potential malpractice in the CAB would include:

- Any criminal offence
- Corruption
- Breach of contract or of any other legal obligation
- Negligence
- Danger to health and safety
- Abuse of clients
- Public safety issues
- Discrimination
- Pollution
- Unethical conduct
- Cover-up of any of the above

This policy outlines:

- Our commitment to openness and good communications
- The way of raising concerns in the workplace for our staff
- The availability of support to those raising issues of concern
- The way we will deal with those who make malicious allegations, as with any other wrongdoing.

This procedure should not be confused with the Grievance Procedure, which should be used where employees are aggrieved with their personal position. Clients who are aggrieved about their own personal situations should use the Complaints Procedure.

Communication and openness:

This policy will be provided to every employee, volunteer and director of Shetland Islands CAB and will be discussed at staff, volunteer and board member induction and staff meetings. It will also be displayed on staff notice boards and wherever else appropriate.

Shetland Islands CAB has a proven track record and we wish to protect our good name. We consider that our employees and volunteers have a considerable contribution to make in the development of our organisation and ensuring a constantly improving quality of service. Their contribution can be ensured by good communication throughout the organisation enabling them to raise good ideas or concerns without fear or favour.

This policy will be developed and reviewed in consultation with paid staff and volunteers.

Raising concerns within the workplace:

Any employee or volunteer or board member who has concerns should raise them in the first instance with the bureau manager. Where the concern involves the manager directly or where the complainant cannot raise their concern with the manager, s/he should instead raise them with the chair.

Employees, volunteers and members of the board should be assured that the board of directors will support all of those who have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, or occurring or is likely to occur. They will be guaranteed confidentiality, if they so request, and protected from reprisals.

Paid staff may also obtain advice regarding raising any concerns, in confidence, with their trades union (if they are a member). The charity, Public Concern at Work may also be able to help in choosing the right choice of action.

Where the concern relates to an actual or potential breach of the Association's membership conditions, individuals should contact their Development Officer in the first instance. The Development Officer will then report the breach to the CEO, if appropriate.

Malicious allegations:

The board of directors will take very seriously any false allegations made maliciously by paid staff, volunteers or board members. The sanctions, which may be used, include disciplinary action and removal from a voluntary position or from the board of directors, depending on the circumstances.

Those making allegations genuinely and who act reasonably and responsibly should have no fear of arbitrary decisions by the board of directors.

Implementation:

Shetland Islands CAB hopes never to have to use the terms of this policy. However, it is essential that where anything does go wrong, we have the opportunity to put it right and justify the faith put in us by our clients, by funders and by the community as a whole. Equally, we wish to develop a relationship of trust with paid staff and volunteers and we therefore need to know about concerns as soon as they arise.

The board of directors undertakes to:

- Respect confidentiality
- Investigate thoroughly
- Provide support and protection if necessary
- Agree to report back on the outcomes of any investigations and, if possible, on any resultant action that is proposed or taken

Introduced January 2020