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**CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING (WHISTLE-BLOWING) POLICY V 2.5**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

1. Age UK London (AUKL) is committed to achieving and maintaining the highest possible standards of integrity, openness and accountability around all areas of its work. In this regard, AUKL seeks to provide an opportunity for staff who have genuine concerns about standards of behaviour and practice, to constructively voice those concerns without fear of recrimination, victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage. Under certain circumstances, employees are protected from suffering any detriment or termination of employment if they make disclosures about organisations for whom the work.

**Qualifying Disclosures**

1. Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as “qualifying disclosures”. A “qualifying disclosure” means a disclosure of information that the employee genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the Organisation has committed a “relevant failure” by:
2. Committing a criminal offence;
3. Failing to comply with a legal obligation;
4. A miscarriage of justice;
5. Endangering the health and safety of an individual;
6. Environmental damage; or
7. Concealing any information relating to the above.
8. These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening or is likely to happen. The Organisation will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.
9. The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who “blow the whistle” where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is like to occur. The disclosure has to be “in the public interest”. We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.
10. AUKL is keen to accept its duty to ensure that any member of staff who raises a concern in good faith, under the terms of this Confidential Reporting Policy, will be properly listened to, provided with a thoughtful and constructive response, and protected from any recriminations.
11. Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

**POLICY**

1. This Policy is quite distinct from, and is not intended as an alternative to other policies and procedures, such as those covering Internal Complaints and Grievance or Staff Discipline and Performance.
2. It is distinctive in its intention to address issues relating to proper standards of behaviour in a publicly funded and accountable organisation such as AUKL.

# CONFIDENTIAL STAFF REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. If a member of staff has a genuine and serious concern relating to issues covered by this Policy they should raise the concern with the person specified in Section 3 below. In doing this they should be aware of the following:

* In raising a concern a member of staff must be sure to be clear about what the specific issue is (it will almost certainly help to write down the facts rather than rely on memory, and to talk it through discreetly before raising the issue if this is possible, in order to clarify what the real issue is)
* Consider if pursuing the matter through this policy is the best possible route. For example, would it be more appropriate for a user organisation to use the AUKL’s External Complaints Procedure, or would the concern be more appropriately raised through the Internal Complaint, Grievance or other policy/procedure.

1. Every effort must be made by all parties to maintain confidentiality wherever possible. This may not however, prove possible in all cases for the extent of the matters raised, such as when the police or other public agencies need to be informed, or when another member of staff is alleged to be responsible for committing a criminal or disciplinary offence.
2. The person hearing the concern must ensure that issues brought to their attention under this policy are dealt with quickly and as sympathetically as possible/appropriate. In particular they must be sensitive to issues involving any type of discriminatory behaviour.
3. Staff who take action under this policy must be informed as promptly as possible about how the concern is being dealt with, and they should receive ongoing information as appropriate.
4. Staff who raise a concern in good faith must be able to do so on the understanding that they have nothing to fear and will not suffer reprisals. Managers however retain the right to invoke the staff discipline and performance procedure, if it is established that the issue raised was not genuine or was raised with casual, frivolous or malicious intent.

# PERSONS WHO SHOULD HEAR THE CONCERNS

1. All concerns should normally be raised with your Line Manager or the Chief Executive who will treat the matter with complete confidence.
2. If the concern relates to the Chief Executive, the Chair of the Board of Trustees should be approached to hear the concern.
3. It is expected that issues of concern will normally, in the manner outlined above, be dealt with wholly within AUKL. If, however, the concern relates to the Chief Executive or to the Chair, or it is considered that for some other reason it cannot properly be dealt with internally, there is an exceptional procedure which can be invoked, whereby the concerned member of staff can raise the matter with the Age England Association Secretariat or with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body.
4. The Chief Executive shall retain details of all whistle blowing concerns, unless they relate to him or her, in which case they will be retained by the Chair on behalf of the trustees. The Chief Executive will circulate all recorded whistle blowing to the trustees.
5. Third parties outside the organisation may also raise concerns, and these may be reported to the Charity in the same way as the above procedure for employees, or they may be made direct to another organisation such as one of our governing bodies, e.g. the Charity Commission. Where they are raised within the Charity they will be recorded and dealt with in exactly the same way as detailed in these procedures. Where they are made externally and we are only made aware of them when the organisation to whom the concern was made makes contact with us, we will co-operate fully and record both the concern and the outcome in the same way as above. As before, the chief executive will keep a record of such concerns, and circulate them to the board.

**VERSION CONTROL**

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| **Version no.** | **Date reviewed** | **Review Date** | **Reviewed by** | **Key changes** |
| 2.0 | May 2015 |  | Peninsula | Reviewed and approved by Peninsula 27/05/15. No significant changes made. |
| 2.1 | June 2016 |  | David Muir, Trustee | Reviewed with minor changes made. |
| 2.2 | 14 Dec 2016 |  | Trustees | Reviewed with minor changes made. |
| 2.3 | 15 May 2019 |  | Trustees | Reviewed and no changes. |
| 2.4 | June 2019 |  | Rob Brown | Non-employee whistleblowing |
| 2.5 | July 2020 | May 2020 | Peninsula/Heather Vernon | Added “Qualifying Disclosure” paragraph |
|  |  | May 2021 |  |  |