

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

## What Is Whistleblowing?

A “whistleblower” is someone who thinks something is wrong and alerts his/her employer or the relevant authorities to what is going on. The law protects whistleblowers from their employer subjecting them to detriment or dismissal by reason of their having “blown the whistle” and from detrimental treatment by their colleagues. To be protected by the law, the act of whistleblowing must fall within the legal rules and the whistleblower must reasonably believe that their disclosure of wrongdoing is made in the public interest.

The Whistleblowing policy should be followed for whistleblowing disclosures. For Complaints and Safeguarding Adults separate policies and procedures exist which should be followed in these cases.

## Our Policy

AUKS’s business is run in accordance with the law. No employee will suffer a detriment for speaking up if they believe that something is wrong.

If an employee has information the latter believes shows any of the following:

- A criminal offence was committed or is being or is likely to be committed
- A person has or is or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred or is or is likely to occur
- The health and safety of any individual has been or is being or is likely to be endangered
- The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the above categories has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

then the individual should raise those concerns immediately with the relevant line manager.

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases the individual should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

However, the individual will still be protected in law if the latter discloses the information to the following:

- A legal adviser in the course of getting legal advice
- A Minister of the Crown

- One of the prescribed persons set out in the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999 (e.g. disclosure of a danger to health and safety to the Health and Safety Executive; disclosure of fraud to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry; disclosure of breach of tax rules to HM Revenue & Customs).

Disclosure to any other person is not generally protected except in very limited circumstances.

After the individual has raised a concern, AUKS will decide how to respond in a responsible and appropriate manner. This will usually involve making internal enquiries but it may become necessary to carry out a full investigation which may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised. AUKS will endeavour to complete investigations within a reasonable time.

AUKS will keep the individual informed of progress and let the latter know when the investigation is completed. AUKS will not be able to inform the individual of any matters which would infringe any duty of confidentiality owed to others.

If an individual uses this policy to raise a concern which the latter reasonably believes to be in the public interest, AUKS assures that the individual will not suffer any form of retribution or detrimental treatment.

Any employee who criticises, bullies or victimises a fellow employee by reason of their whistleblowing will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the conduct.

### **Whistleblowing by non-employees**

If an individual is not an employee of Age UK Surrey, the latter can still contact AUKS to report any concerns or disclosures over wrongdoing and these will be treated in the same way.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Date agreed by Board of Age UK Surrey</b>	<b>Reviewed</b>
4	25 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	August 2016
4	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2016 (no changes required)	July 2018 July 2019
5	24 September 2019	