



## **ROOT AND BRANCH CHANGE**

### **Whistle blowing policy and procedure**

#### 1. Purpose

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 came into force in the UK on 2 July 1999. It is therefore necessary to have a policy to encourage staff to unburden grievance concerns without fear of discrimination. The term “whistleblower” is used to describe a person, usually an employee, who becomes aware of a serious problem in the organisation and raises the matter so it may be investigated and if necessary corrected. Sometimes this may involve bringing the problem to wider attention. Early disclosure may give the employer the opportunity to rectify the problem. This policy applies wherever Root and Branch Change operates, in the UK or in other countries.

#### 2. Persons affected

Root and Branch Change staff – paid and unpaid.

Staff and Volunteers of organisations partnering with Root and Branch Change.

Service users of Root and Branch Change and of its partner organisations.

#### 3. Policy

Root and Branch Change is committed to the highest standards of quality, openness and accountability. This manifests itself through team meetings, regular one to one’s between line managers and staff, complaints procedure, disciplinary and grievance procedures etc. As part of that commitment, we encourage all staff and others with serious concerns about any aspect of the work to come forward and express their concerns. In many cases, concerns or complaints will be dealt with through the procedures mentioned.

#### 4. Procedure

The following procedures are proposed to make provision for anyone to disclose information of suspected malpractice within Root and Branch Change and its partner organisations on a confidential basis and to be protected against victimisation or dismissal.

The openness and accountability to which we commit relates to any concerns regarding any of the following:

- A criminal offence
- Financial frauds, money laundering and malpractice

- Other types of corruption
- Attempts to deliberately cover up information
- Abuse or neglect of vulnerable people
- Damage to the environment
- Failure to deliver proper standards of service
- Damaging personal conflicts at senior level
- Bullying, harassment or victimisation in the work place
- Breach of a legal obligation
- Danger to health or safety of an individual
- Terrorist activity

Concerns should be reported at an early stage before problems have a chance to become serious. We will support concerned employees and protect them from reprisals or victimisation. Confidentiality will be respected.

Anyone found trying to discourage a concerned employee from coming forward to express a concern will be subject to disciplinary action. In the same way, anyone criticising or victimising an employee as a result of a concern being expressed will also face disciplinary action.

### **Who to Contact**

In the first instance, anyone wishing to report a concern should do so, in confidence, with their Line Manager. If for some reason this is not possible, then another Line Manager or the Chief Executive.

If anyone wishes to seek advice or clarification before reporting any matter they should see the Chief Executive.

If policy and procedures within the organisation are working properly there should be no need for contact to be made with an external agency to express concerns. However, if these internal procedures have been exhausted, then the concerns may be reported as follows:

If the problem involved a very senior member of staff of the organisation - contact the Chair or another Root and Branch Change Trustee.

In the case of abuse of vulnerable people – also refer to your safeguarding reporting procedures

The Charity Commission (UK): You can report things that have happened, are happening or are likely to happen. Only report issues to them that could seriously harm:

- the people a charity helps
- the charity's staff or volunteers
- services the charity provides
- the charity's assets
- the charity's reputation

Examples of serious harm include:

- if someone’s health or safety is in danger, for example if a charity does not adhere to its safeguarding policy
- a criminal offence, for example theft, fraud or financial mismanagement
- if a charity uses its activities as a platform for extremist views or materials
- loss of charity funds, for example when a charity loses more than 10% of its income or more than £10,000
- if the charity does not meet its legal obligations, for example if someone uses a charity for significant personal advantage

**Who else to tell**

- [the police](#) about a crime or if you’re worried about someone’s safety
- HMRC (UK) if you have concerns about tax, like [money laundering](#) or [tax evasion](#)
- [Action Fraud](#) if you suspect fraud
- the police if you [suspect terrorist activity](#)

**Dealing with Concerns**

All concerns will be investigated carefully and thoroughly. If appropriate, results of investigations and any action that is proposed will be passed on to the person expressing the initial concern. However, confidentiality needs to be maintained at all times.

If it is found that malicious, unfounded allegations have been made this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

**5. Revision history**

The Trustees will review this policy every three years.

Date approved or amended	Signed	Role

Adopted May 2022