

## SECTION THIRTEEN: Whistleblowing Policy

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WRAS is committed to conducting its operations with honesty and integrity and expects all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported to the Operations Director as soon as possible.

This policy outlines what you should do if you suspect something happening at work is putting you or others in danger, or is illegal or unethical. It applies to all trustees, employees, volunteers, consultants, contractors and agency workers. It does not form part of any employee's Contract of Employment and WRAS may amend it at any time.

### **What is Whistleblowing?**

WRAS' aim is to maintain the highest standards of integrity in everything it does, but all organisations can occasionally be affected by conduct that is dangerous, against the law or which breaches ethical or professional codes.

Should you have concerns about any such matters, WRAS would encourage you to report them immediately. This is called 'whistleblowing', namely the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to WRAS' activities.

The types of concerns you may want to raise with WRAS via this Whistleblowing Policy include:

- Any activity you suspect is criminal.
- Any activity you suspect puts health and safety at risk.
- Any activity you suspect may damage the environment.
- Any activity you suspect is a miscarriage of justice.
- Any activity you suspect breaches WRAS' policy on bribery and corruption.
- Any failure to comply with legal or regulatory obligations.
- Any failure to meet professional requirements.
- Any attempt to conceal one or more of these activities.

You should speak to the Operations Director if you are not sure whether something you have become aware of is covered by this policy.

Please note that this policy does not cover anything to do with you personally, such as how other people are treating you. In that regard, please refer to the Equal Opportunity and Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy or the Grievance Procedure.

### **How do I raise a concern?**

WRAS is hopeful that, in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your Manager however, where you would prefer not to raise a particular concern with your Manager, where your concern is particularly serious or where your Manager fails to act for any reason, you should contact the Operations Director. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

Your letter should say that you are raising your concerns under this policy and then explain what they are. Include all the key facts, dates and the names of the people involved.

WRAS will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

After the initial meeting, WRAS will investigate your concerns and may ask you to attend further meetings. To investigate properly, WRAS may involve specialists with particular knowledge or experience of the issues you have raised.

You will be kept informed about how WRAS' investigations are progressing and how long they are likely to take. Sometimes however, WRAS may be unable to give you details about the investigation (or any action it leads to) as it may need to protect confidentiality. WRAS understands this may be frustrating and give you concerns about whether it has actually done anything. As such, if this happens, WRAS will do its best to sit down with you and explain why it is acting in the way it is.

You can be assured that WRAS will take your concerns seriously. Your concerns will be addressed fairly albeit WRAS cannot guarantee the outcome of its investigations will be the one you want. If you are not satisfied with how WRAS has conducted its investigations, you can take the matter to one of the Trustees.

### **Confidentiality**

WRAS hopes that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, WRAS will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

### **External Disclosures**

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

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body, such as a regulator. WRAS strongly encourages you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect operates a confidential helpline (see below).

This policy covers the actions of third parties such as donors, supporters and suppliers, as well as WRAS' staff. Should you have concerns about a third party, you are encouraged to raise them with WRAS before approaching anyone else.

### **Protection & Support**

WRAS aims to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using the Grievance Procedure.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. If however, WRAS concludes that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **13.5 CONTACTS**

<b>Whistleblowing Officer</b>	Trevor Weeks 01825 873003 hospital@eastsussexwras.org.uk	<b>Protect</b> (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 020 3117 2520; Email: <a href="mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk">whistle@protect-advice.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="http://www.pcaw.org.uk">www.pcaw.org.uk</a>
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