

BRIDGING THE GAP ISLINGTON/BRIDGING THE GAP MENTORING

WHISTLEBLOWING

POLICY

Bridging the Gap Islington promotes transparency and honesty. All staff and volunteers should be honest with service users and other people if events do not work out as expected and apologise if necessary, when things go wrong.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Staff and others working on behalf of the charity should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the issue.
- No employee or other person involved with Bridging the Gap Islington will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.
- If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, you should not agree to remain silent. You should report the matter to the Co-ordinator or to any other member of the Trustees.

Background

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 amended the Employment Rights Act 1996 to provide protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters in the public interest. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made by an employee who has a reasonable belief that

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or
- concealment of any of the above;

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. You have no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the charity's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

If you make a protected disclosure you have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because you have made a disclosure. We encourage you to raise your concerns under this procedure in the first instance.

Procedure

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of your own contract of employment, which should be raised via the Grievance Procedure.

Stage 1: If someone is unhappy with a decision about an issue regarding the proper administration of the charity, any issue regarding safeguarding or the welfare of clients, staff or volunteers or any of the issues described above they should initially raise the issue through the process described in the complaints policy. They should discuss the issue verbally with relevant staff and then, if necessary follow the formal written procedure.

Stage 2: If you are concerned that the Co-ordinator or trustees have failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the relevant person, you should escalate the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The Chair will arrange for a review of the investigation to be carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make their own report to the Board.

Stage 3: If on conclusion of stages 1 and 2 you reasonably believe that the appropriate action has not been taken, you should report the matter to the relevant body. This includes:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- The Health and Safety Executive
- The Environment Agency
- The Serious Fraud Office
- The Charity Commission
- The Pensions Regulator
- The Information Commissioner
- The Financial Conduct Authority

You can find the full list in The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496899/BIS-16-79-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person.pdf

Data protection

Bridging the Gap wants to support staff and volunteers who in good faith whistle-blow in relation to any important concern in the public interest and will, so far as is possible, protect them from any adverse consequences such as reprisals or victimisation.

When an individual makes a disclosure, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with the data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

Approved 8/9/2022

To be reviewed 9/24