

Manor House Development Trust (MHDT) Whistle-blowing Policy

1. What is Whistle-blowing?

- 1.1 Whistle-blowing encourages and enables employees, staff and volunteers, staff working for partner agencies, users and contractors to raise serious concerns within the organisation rather than either overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside the organisation.
- 1.2 Employees are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that doing so would be disloyal to their colleagues and to the organisation. MHDT is keen that anyone with a real concern will 'blow the whistle'.

2. MHDT's Commitment

- 2.1 MHDT is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with our commitment, we expect that all employees, and others who we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of our organisation's work will come forward and voice those concerns. In recognition of this commitment, our named responsible officer for this policy is MHDT Director.

3. Who does this policy apply to?

- 3.1 The policy applies to all employees (including volunteers, part time employees, work experience placements) and those contractors working for the organisation on the premises e.g. agency staff, building contractors. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with MHDT.

4. Policy aims

- 4.1 The policy aims to:
 - 4.1.1 Provide avenues for all employees to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on action taken
 - 4.1.2 Ensure that responses are received to concerns raised and that the person whistle-blowing is aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied
 - 4.1.3 Reassure anyone who is whistle-blowing that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made the disclosure in good faith.



4.2 What types of concern are covered?

4.2.1 All conduct which is an offence or a breach of law

4.2.2 Miscarriage of justice

4.2.3 Health and safety risks, including risk to the public as well as to other employees

4.2.4 Damage to the environment

4.2.5 Unauthorised use of public funds

4.2.6 Possible fraud and corruption

4.2.7 Sexual or physical abuse of users – particularly vulnerable groups such as older people, disabled people or children

4.2.8 Other unethical conduct

4.3 N.B. There are other procedures available to employees e.g. Grievance Procedure which relates to complaints about your personal employment. This policy does not replace the Complaints Policy, which is for public use.

5. Safeguards

5.1 MHDT recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what is being said is true, then there should be nothing to fear from raising the concern. This is, in effect, doing your duty to your employer and to those who are being provided with a service.

5.2 MHDT will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone who raises such legitimate concerns, and will take the appropriate action to protect anyone raising such concerns.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, you may be asked to come forward as a witness.

6.2 This policy, however, does encourage you to put your name to your concern wherever possible. Please note that you:

- Must disclose the information in good faith
- Must believe it to be substantially true
- Must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations

- Must **not** seek any personal gain

7. How to raise your concern

- 7.1 As a first step – you should normally raise concerns either verbally or in writing with your immediate supervisor or manager. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue involved and who is suspected of malpractice. For example, if you think that your supervisor or manager is involved then you would need to raise the issue with a more senior manager.
- 7.2 If the concern is agreed to be substantial, you or your manager will notify MHDT Director (as the named responsible officer) either verbally or in writing. He will acknowledge that the concern has been received, confirm that confidentiality will be maintained, provide support mechanisms for you to enable you to give evidence, and he will then investigate the allegation. Within 14 days of receiving the concern he will inform you of the outcome. A meeting with the subject of the allegation will be held during the investigation period. At this meeting, they will be informed of the basis of the allegation, their response(s) to the allegation will be obtained, support available to them will be identified and they will be informed about the circumstances under which their identify will be revealed i.e. should the investigation result in a finding of malpractice, fraud, abuse, etc. At this point in time appropriate action would be taken and other agencies informed as required.