



Whistleblowing Policy

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Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Project RESET expects the highest standards of conduct from all employees, volunteers, and associates, and will treat seriously any concern raised about illegal, unethical, or improper conduct. This procedure applies to all employees (including self employed), volunteers, contractors, and anyone working under a contract of service with Project RESET.

All staff are expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of their Line Manager, or Matthew Pretty/Keisha Pretty (Directors) any serious concern, impropriety, or breach of policy or procedure.

If a member of staff feels unable to follow the internal procedure, they may seek confidential advice from one of the following independent sources:

- Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work): 020 3117 2520 / www.protect-advice.org.uk
- The Whistleblowing Helpline: 08000 724 725 / enquiries@wbhelpline.org.uk
- NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: 0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk

Project RESET expects employees to follow the internal procedure before raising concerns externally, unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example, where there is reason to believe evidence may be concealed or destroyed). Employees who take concerns to external sources such as the media without following internal steps may be subject to formal investigation under the organisation's disciplinary procedures.

Speak Up Culture

Project RESET is committed to fostering an open and transparent culture where staff, volunteers, contractors and associates feel confident to raise concerns about practice, behaviour, safeguarding, welfare or organisational conduct.

Raising concerns is viewed as a positive and professional responsibility that helps protect children, staff and the organisation.



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Purpose

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting a concern about suspected wrongdoing, risk, or malpractice within an organisation. It covers situations where an individual believes that the public interest is at risk — for example, that someone's health or safety is endangered, a criminal offence has occurred, or there has been a failure to comply with legal or safeguarding duties.

Whistleblowing is distinct from making a personal grievance or complaint about one's own employment situation.

This procedure enables staff, volunteers, and others associated with Project RESET to notify the appropriate person (normally their line manager, or Matthew Pretty/Keisha Pretty (Directors)) of any reasonable suspicion of illegal, unethical, or improper conduct. Concerns relating specifically to the safeguarding or protection of children and young people must be reported directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL.

Line managers and Directors will act swiftly and constructively to investigate any concern raised under this policy in accordance with Project RESET's disciplinary and safeguarding procedures. Concerns regarding a colleague's professional capability or performance should not be raised under this procedure and should instead follow Project RESET's Performance Management procedures.

When Should This Policy Be Used?

This procedure is not designed to replace or be used as an alternative to the Grievance and Complaints Procedure, which should be used where an employee has concerns about their own employment situation (e.g. working conditions, pay, or treatment).



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This procedure should be used to report concerns about wrongdoing or risk that affects others or the organisation as a whole — not personal grievances. Employees must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing that the information disclosed is accurate.

Project RESET will not tolerate harassment, victimisation, or disadvantage towards anyone who raises a genuine concern under this procedure. If an individual is unsure whether their concern falls under this policy, they may seek advice from their line manager, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, or one of the independent contacts listed in this policy

Mechanism for Raising Concerns

Concerns should normally be raised with the individual's line manager. If the concern involves the line manager, or if the employee believes their report has not been appropriately addressed, it should be escalated to a Directors of the company. Any member of staff (other than the line manager or Director) who is approached by a colleague with a whistleblowing concern should advise them to raise it directly with their line manager or Director. Employees who feel unable to follow this route may contact one of the alternative persons listed in this policy.

Concerns should ideally be made in writing, clearly setting out the background, nature of the issue, relevant dates, names, and evidence. Keeping contemporaneous notes is encouraged. Employees may seek support from a trade union representative or a trusted colleague when raising concerns, provided that person is independent of the issue.

Where anonymity is requested, Project RESET will make every effort to respect that request, although this may limit the ability to investigate fully. The earlier and more openly a concern is raised, the easier it is to take appropriate action. All cases will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially. Information relating to whistleblowing concerns will only be shared with those who need to know in order to investigate and manage the concern appropriately. Project RESET will aim to inform the individual of the outcome as soon as practicable.

While the outcome sought by the whistleblower cannot always be guaranteed, Project RESET will ensure that all concerns are handled fairly, promptly, and appropriately.



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Concerns Involving Directors

Where concerns relate to a Director, or where an individual believes there may be a conflict of interest involving both Directors, advice may be sought directly from external whistleblowing organisations, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Local Authority, the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line or other appropriate regulatory bodies.

Examples of Concerns Covered by This Policy

This policy covers serious misconduct or wrongdoing such as, but not limited to:

- Fraud, theft, or misuse of Project RESET's funds or resources
- Breaches of safeguarding or child protection procedures
- Dangerous or unsafe practices at work
- Breaches of health and safety regulations
- Corruption, bribery, or the receipt of improper gifts or advantages
- Allowing personal interests to conflict with Project RESET's interests
- Failure to comply with legal obligations or statutory duties
- Criminal activity
- Environmental damage
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above
- Inappropriate online conduct, social media activity or electronic communications that may place children, staff or the organisation at risk.



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- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures or deliberate disregard of safeguarding responsibilities.
- Unsafe premises, security arrangements, fire safety concerns or environmental hazards affecting the hub, staff, visitors or young people.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

All staff and volunteers have a duty to report concerns about the safety and welfare of children and young people. Concerns must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL if they relate to:

- Physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect of a young person
- Inappropriate or exploitative relationships between adults and young people
- Any actions or behaviours that place a young person at risk of harm

Concerns may relate to the behaviour of a colleague (including senior staff), a volunteer, a trustee, a visitor, another young person, or someone outside Project RESET.

Regardless of the source, concerns must be reported and recorded without delay. For further information around safeguarding, refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Concerns that do not meet the threshold for a safeguarding allegation but may indicate poor judgement, boundary concerns or behaviour inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct should be reported in accordance with Project RESET's Low-Level Concerns procedures.

Actions and Protections

Any individual who reasonably believes that their concern relates to one of the matters in section 6 and raises it in good faith will not face disciplinary action or any detriment



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for doing so. Project RESET will take disciplinary or corrective action, including dismissal in serious cases, against anyone found to be:

- Victimising or intimidating a whistleblower
- Attempting to deter another person from raising a genuine concern
- Making a malicious, vexatious, or knowingly false allegation

These protections apply equally to employees, self-employed contractors, volunteers, mentors, tutors and any individual working on behalf of Project RESET.

Record Keeping

Records of whistleblowing concerns, investigations and outcomes will be maintained securely and confidentially in accordance with data protection requirements.

Access will be restricted to authorised personnel.

Persons to Contact

Concerns may be raised with any of the following:

- **Your Line Manager**
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL**
- **Director of Project RESET**

If you feel unable to raise your concern internally, you may contact one of the external whistleblowing bodies listed at the beginning of this policy.