

Pippa's Guardians Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

Pippa's Guardians is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, honesty and accountability. We encourage all employees, volunteers and contractors to raise genuine concerns about suspected wrongdoing, malpractice or risks to children, colleagues, the public or the organisation.

We are committed to ensuring that anyone who raises a concern in good faith is treated fairly and does not suffer victimisation, harassment or any other detriment as a result of speaking up.

This policy provides a clear process for raising concerns and explains how they will be handled.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors and anyone working on behalf of Pippa's Guardians.

Employees are expected to respect confidential information relating to the organisation. However, this does not prevent anyone from raising concerns about suspected wrongdoing, illegal activity or safeguarding issues through this whistleblowing procedure.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of concerns about suspected wrongdoing that is in the public interest.

This may include concerns about:

- Criminal offences.
- Fraud, theft or financial malpractice.
- Safeguarding concerns involving children or vulnerable people.
- Abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Health and safety risks.
- Environmental damage.
- Breaches of legal or regulatory obligations.
- Discrimination, harassment or serious misconduct.
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

What is Not Covered by this Policy?

This policy is not intended for personal employment concerns such as:

- Pay or benefits.
- Working hours.
- Annual leave.
- Interpersonal disagreements.
- Disciplinary matters.

These issues should normally be raised through the company complaints policy.

Raising a Concern

Where appropriate, whistleblowing concerns should first be raised with your Line Manager

If you do not feel able to speak to your Line Manager, or if the concern involves them, you should contact the designated Investigating Officer.

Investigating Officer

The designated Investigating Officer is:

Ben Hughes

Managing Director

Telephone: **07714 034749**

Email: ben@pippasguardians.co.uk

If the concern relates to the Managing Director or there is a conflict of interest, the concern should instead be reported to:

Imogen Trevethan

Telephone: **07593 443685**

Email: imogen@pippasguardians.co.uk

External Reporting

Where a member of staff does not feel able to raise concerns internally regarding safeguarding or child protection failures, they may contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The advice line is available Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 8.00pm.

Protection for Whistleblowers

Pippa's Guardians will not tolerate victimisation, harassment or any detrimental treatment of a person because they have raised a genuine concern under this policy.

Any employee found to have retaliated against a whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Concerns should be raised honestly and in the reasonable belief that they are true and in the public interest. Deliberately false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

How Concerns Will Be Investigated

The Investigating Officer will:

- acknowledge receipt of the concern as soon as reasonably practicable;
- assess the information provided;
- determine whether the matter falls within this policy;
- decide whether an investigation is required;
- appoint an appropriate investigator where necessary;
- keep the person raising the concern informed of progress where reasonably possible.

The individual raising the concern may be asked to provide further information during the investigation.

Where appropriate, concerns involving safeguarding may be referred immediately to the relevant statutory agencies, including the Local Authority, Police or other regulatory bodies.

While every effort will be made to provide updates, some information may need to remain confidential to protect other individuals or the integrity of the investigation.

Confidentiality and Anonymous Reporting

Pippa's Guardians will make every reasonable effort to protect the identity of anyone raising a concern confidentially.

Concerns may also be raised anonymously. However, anonymous reports may limit the organisation's ability to investigate fully or provide feedback if further information is required.

Individuals should note that reporting concerns directly to the media may result in the loss of legal protections available under whistleblowing legislation.

Timescales

The nature and complexity of whistleblowing investigations varies considerably and may involve external agencies such as the Police or Local Authority. For this reason, it is not possible to specify fixed timescales.

The Investigating Officer will:

- acknowledge receipt of the concern as soon as reasonably practicable;
- keep the individual informed of progress where appropriate;

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- provide the outcome of the investigation, where it is lawful and appropriate to do so;
- explain any actions that will be taken where possible.

Updates will normally be provided in writing by email or letter, depending on the wishes of the individual and the circumstances of the case.

If You Are Not Satisfied

If you believe your concern has not been investigated appropriately, or that the wrongdoing continues, you may raise your concern with another senior manager or an appropriate prescribed body such as those listed below..

If all internal procedures have been exhausted and you remain dissatisfied, Pippa's Guardians recognises the lawful rights of workers and former workers to make protected disclosures to prescribed bodies such as:

Protect (the Whistleblowing Charity)

Telephone: **0203 117 2520**

Website: www.protect-advice.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive

Telephone: **0300 003 1647**

Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm

Data Protection

Personal information obtained during a whistleblowing investigation will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information will only be shared where necessary for the purposes of investigating the concern or where required by law.

Related Legislation

This policy is intended to comply with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) and reflects current UK whistleblowing best practice.

Policy Information	
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Responsibility for Policy Review:	Imogen Trevethan
Policy Approved by:	Pippa's Guardians Senior Leadership Team