

# Speaking Up (Whistleblowing) Policy and Procedure

## Policy summary

The NCIs are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. We seek to encourage a culture where speaking up is seen as a normal part of upholding our common values.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage reporting of suspected wrongdoing and provide clear guidance on: (1) the steps our people should take if they have concerns; (2) how our people raising concerns will be supported; and (3) what will happen after such concerns are raised

The Policy also seeks to reassure our people that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without the fear of reprisals.

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## Introduction

We are committed to conducting our activities with honesty and integrity and we expect all our people to maintain high standards in accordance with our policies and procedures.

However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time. Indeed there have been recent examples where UK organisations have found that some of their people were not acting in accordance with their adopted values, or worse, found that a few employees knowingly harboured illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential to prevent such situations occurring or to address them if they do occur.

Our Speaking Up policy makes it easier for everyone working for the National Church Institutions, or on our behalf, to raise any concerns, without fear of retaliation. We will protect those who speak up from any reprisal or victimisation.

We hope that our people will feel able to voice concerns openly under this policy, either internally or externally. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you. Further information on confidentiality can be found on page 9. The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage a culture of openness and accountability effectively promoted at all levels
- To encourage our people to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate and that their confidentiality will be respected
- To provide our people with guidance as to how to raise those concerns
- To reassure our people that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals

## Speaking Up (whistleblowing)

We encourage a culture where speaking up should be seen as a normal part of upholding our common values.

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing (generally a breach of a legal, statutory or regulatory requirement or unethical, immoral behaviour). This may include:

- Breach of a legal requirement – e.g. safeguarding, health and safety obligations
- General malpractice – such as immoral, illegal or unethical conduct
- Gross misconduct – e.g. Theft, fraud, assault, sexual harassment, etc.
- Failure to comply with the corporate governance policy or other compliance matter
- Deliberate non-compliance, to the detriment of the organisation, with the stated policies, procedures or any underhand dealings or practices
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.
- In addition, the NCIs also encourage speaking out where this would challenge behaviours or attitudes not consistent with our values

## National Church Institutions: [Speaking Up Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure]

If you have any concerns related to any of the above, you should report it directly to your line manager or in accordance with this policy (see below). You can also report any concerns externally via a variety of routes, see further information and specific contacts on page 9.

Concerns in relation to fraud, money laundering, bribes etc. should be referred under the anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy directly to the Anti-Fraud Lead (The Chief Finance & Operating Officer) via the [report.fraud@churchofengland.org](mailto:report.fraud@churchofengland.org) e-mail address unless urgent where direct timely contact should be sought. See the anti-fraud, bribery and corruption policy for more details.

Concerns which raise personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless the particular case is in the public interest. However, we encourage our people to feel able to speak up about such concerns. Whilst behaviour might initially be reported or come to light under the arrangements set out in this policy, any personal grievances will be dealt with under the respective NCI policies [ *Include links to* Dignity at Work, Grievance procedure, Disciplinary procedure, etc.

## Protected disclosures

An individual making a “protected disclosure” is given statutory protection from victimisation under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, provided the disclosure is in the public interest. A “protected disclosure” is any disclosure of information which, in reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure, tends to show one or more of the following has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed:

- A criminal offence
- A failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- The putting of someone’s health or safety in danger
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above.

Certain instances of wrongdoing as described under the “What is speaking out?” section, for example breaches of codes of conduct or regarding the governance policy, may not constitute a protected disclosure. You should seek advice if unsure on this point, see the External Disclosures section below.

## Should I speak up?

If you become aware of a situation which is of concern you are encouraged to speak up.

You may find it helpful to consider these key questions for clarity and to help you decide if your grounds for suspicion are reasonable:

- What do I think is happening?
- What (if any) evidence do I have?
- Who is doing it?
- Why might it be wrong?
- What clear explanations might there be?
- May others be aware of the issue(s)?
- What NCIs are involved, who may I report this to?

## Speaking Up - How to raise a concern

### First Steps – Informal Approaches

As a first step you should normally raise your concerns with your immediate line manager. This will depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is thought to be involved in suspicious wrongdoing. If it is not appropriate to raise the matter with the line manager you may also wish to follow up the suspicion with more informal methods such as speaking to a Union representative, Human Resources or the Risk Management & Internal Audit department (see Appendix A) or pursue through the more formal Speaking Up policy. As a reminder, do not always assume that your line manager is aware of the issue(s). Informal routes to raising a concern may be particularly appropriate where concerns are raised about a failure to work according to our values, but where no suspicion of more serious wrongdoing is suspected, or where an individual is unsure whether the concern is properly a whistleblowing matter.

## Speaking Up - How to raise a concern – formal approaches

### Stage 1 – Raising the suspicion.

Once you believe there are reasonable grounds for suspecting an activity and that the use of the policy is appropriate, you should raise the concern. This might be with your immediate line manager or director, the Chief Finance & Operations Officer or the Director of People or one of the other people named in Appendix A to this policy.

If you do not feel able to raise the concern through these channels, you should alert one of the Supervising Members. They are specified members of the NCIs' Audit Committees (see Appendix B) who are there to support with any Speaking Out concern.

The manager that the matter is raised with or the Supervising Member will take the details of the concern and your contact details.

### Stage 2 – Initial Assessment

The manager or Supervising Member will then decide how the initial evaluation should be conducted. All cases will usually be reported to the relevant Supervising Member and they will consider the outcome and recommendations, and be briefed on the progress of any subsequent initial investigation if necessary.

You will be informed of the result of the initial investigation though there may be some aspects which remain confidential, e.g. resulting disciplinary proceedings.

If the Supervising Member decides that the matter should not be taken further but the individual who spoke out is unhappy about this, a desk top review of the documentation by another Audit Committee member followed by a one-to-one interview may take place. If there is still no agreement and the individual remains dissatisfied, they may use the most formal procedures of direct representation to the whole Audit Committee.

**Stage 3 – Detailed Investigation.** If after the initial assessment there appear to be grounds for the suspicion, further work will take place. The investigations will be as swift as possible

as this will increase the chances of revealing any wrongdoing. As the result of any wrongdoing perpetrated, the appropriate disciplinary or other procedures may be brought into play following a review of the investigation by the appropriate Senior Manager. If the suspicion is not found to have grounds, the individual who spoke out may appeal as documented in the Stage 2 section above.

**Stage 4 – Follow Up to investigation.** After the investigations have taken place, any necessary changes to rectify errors resulting from the wrongdoing should be implemented if possible. If not already involved, the wrongdoer's director/head of department (and any other relevant people) will, in consultation with appropriate advisors, review the risks and create mitigating controls/actions as appropriate. The rest of the Audit Committee and any other governing bodies responsible for the area of work involved in the situation, will be alerted.

## Confidentiality

We would encourage our people not to raise concerns anonymously as proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you or establish whether any allegations are credible. It may be difficult to get clarification and give feedback. However, we recognise that there are circumstances where an individual may feel threatened or scared for their personal safety and in such circumstances may be unwilling to speak openly. If raising concerns anonymously, it is very important to provide as much detail as possible given the difficulties outlined above of seeking further information.

If you are concerned about possible reprisals if your identity is revealed, you should come forward to a Supervising Member, Director of People or the Director of Risk Management & Internal Audit and appropriate measures can be taken to preserve confidentiality.

Anonymous concerns will, however, always be taken seriously and investigated as fully as possible.

## Protection and support for individuals who speak out

It is understandable that those who speak up are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support our people that raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. Disciplinary action may be taken against those who harass whistle-blowers following a thorough investigation.

## External Disclosures

We welcome any disclosures which are made externally, and we commit to working with any external parties to resolve any concerns which are raised.

The independent Whistleblowing charity, Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work), operates a confidential and independent advice line managed by qualified lawyers with a wealth of experience in the law on speaking up and whistleblowing. They can help workers who are unsure whether or how to raise a public interest concern. You can find more information at <https://protect-advice.org.uk/advice-line/> or by ringing **020 3117 2520**

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. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator, e.g. the FCA. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to any external sources.



## APPENDIX A

### Routes for raising concerns - Designated Contacts

Where possible concerns would be raised initially with your direct line manager or head of department.

If you feel unable to raise the concern at that level, please contact any one of the designated contacts below:

Director of People

#### **Christine Hewitt-Dyer**

Direct Dial: 020 7898 1565

Email: [christine.hewittdyer@churchofengland.org](mailto:christine.hewittdyer@churchofengland.org)

Union Chair of the Joint Staff Council

#### **Harvey Howlett**

Direct Dial: 020 7898 1782

Mobile Phone: 07766 952336

Email: [harvey.howlett@churchofengland.org](mailto:harvey.howlett@churchofengland.org)

Interim Director of Risk Management and Internal Audit

#### **Shingo Soga**

Email: [shingo.soga@churchofengland.org](mailto:shingo.soga@churchofengland.org)

Director of Risk Management and Internal Audit – in post from March 2020

#### **Stephanie Harrison**

Direct Dial: TBC

Email: [stephanie.harrison@churchofengland.org](mailto:stephanie.harrison@churchofengland.org)

## APPENDIX B

### Designated Supervising Members - Contact Details

If you do not feel able to raise the concern through the staff, you should alert one of the Supervising Members. They are specified members of the NCIs' Audit Committees (see Appendix B) who are there to support with any Speaking Out concern.

**Note that you are entitled to report to ANY designated supervising member, regardless of the NCI for whom you work.**

Details for the current Supervising Members are:

Stephen Hogg (**Archbishops' Council Audit Committee**)  
Telephone: 01729 823765 (home number) 07966 208465 (mobile number)

Email: [stephenhogg64@gmail.com](mailto:stephenhogg64@gmail.com)

Ian Ailles (**Church Commissioners' Audit Committee**)  
Telephone: 01727 864935 (home number) 07711 189131 (mobile number)

Email: [ian.ailles@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.ailles@btinternet.com)

Richard Hubbard (**Pensions Board Audit and Risk Committee**)  
Telephone: 01483 562012 (home number) 0777 0734 889 (mobile number)

Email: [rhubbard44@outlook.com](mailto:rhubbard44@outlook.com)

**Please note these are home details so please only contact members at a reasonable hour.**

### Lambeth Palace/Bishopthorpe

Members of Staff at Bishopthorpe and Lambeth Palace should also feel free to contact ANY of the supervising members above if they wish to raise an issue.

## Approval and review

Approved by	JECBSB July 2019
Policy owner	Director of People
Policy author	Helen Fisher HR, Harvey Howlett JSC
Date	19 -09- 2019
Review date	2021

## Revision history

Version no.	Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of changes
	Feb 2020	Sept 2019	Appendix A and B updated
	Sept 2019	2017	Policy refresh
	2017	August 2016	Reviewed for legality
	August 2016		Reviewed by Trevor Forrest HR