

1. Whistle-blowing Policy

The Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance (NDBF) seeks to act with probity in its professional behaviour and aims to help staff, office holders and volunteers to follow, and be seen to follow, the highest ethical and moral standards. Should there be a failure in this, the policy seeks to enable the organisation to be alerted to any potential problem or wrongdoing reasonably believed to exist, without fear or negative reprisal in response to the revelation.

To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children or are required to have appropriate whistle-blowing procedures, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.

Whistle-blowing may also apply to situations of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour in situations unrelated to children or adults who may be vulnerable, and these same principles can be applied.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives workers legal protection against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. Whilst the Act does not provide the same protection for volunteers, the NDBF adopts the same approach in their protection.

The policy of the NDBF is to safeguard the interests of any of its employees, office holders or volunteers when they act as alerters regarding any neglect or abuse, mental, physical, emotional, sexual, racial/ethnic or financial, of service users or any similar abuse of colleagues.

The NDBF accepts that it is bound by legislation in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and guarantees that procedures will be invoked in ways which do not prejudice the whistle-blower's own position and prospects. The NDBF will protect the employee, office holder or volunteer against victimisation and provide support throughout the investigation process.

The NDBF is committed to ensuring that employees, office holders and volunteers have:

- Knowledge and understanding of protection procedures
- Are committed to emphasising that harassment is unacceptable
- Are enabled to identify oppressive abuse when it occurs
- Are informed regarding their individual duty to act to protect service users
- Are made aware of measures to safeguard their interests if they act as whistle-blowers
- Are made aware of their rights under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for this policy and its implementation is with Bishop's Council sitting as the Board of Directors.

Review

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

2. Procedure

The NDBF encourages employees, office holders and volunteers to regard it as their duty to the Diocese of Newcastle and their professional obligation to raise legitimate concerns about suspected misconduct by colleagues, managers or those with whom they work.

The NDBF sees its employees, office Holders and volunteers in the roles of alerters to promote the safeguarding of the rights of others, to log any concerns and report such concerns to one of the following:

- *Sharon Devlin (Director of Safeguarding);*
- the Ven Rachel Wood (Archdeacon of Northumberland);
- Chris Elder (Diocesan Secretary); or
- Canon Simon Harper, Chair of the Newcastle Diocesan Board of Finance.

Alters are not being asked to verify or prove that concerns are true. The NDBF seeks to protect its employees, office holders and volunteers from victimisation when they act as alters.

Anybody who is concerned about any malpractice but unsure whether to blow the whistle or to stay silent or are unclear about how to go about blowing the whistle may obtain free expert help from the independent charity:

Protect Advice
The Green House
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA
Advice Line: 020 3117 2520
Website: protect-advice.org.uk