

## **HINCKLEY HOMELESS GROUP**

### **LAWRENCE HOUSE SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION**

#### **Staff Whistle-blowing Policy**

##### **Agreement with**

**Sharon Stacey, Chief Officer (Housing, Community Safety and Partnerships), Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council**

#### **Introduction**

This document covers the agreement between Hinckley Homeless Group (HHG) and Sharon Stacey, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) concerning the HHG Whistleblowing Policy

Workers who blow the whistle on wrongdoing at work are protected from victimisation and dismissal under law. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 has been successfully used on many occasions to protect whistleblowers from reprisals and also to secure compensation for those victimised for revealing serious wrongdoing.

The Act aims to promote greater openness in the workplace between employers and workers in dealing with wrongdoing that might arise. Under the Act, workers will be required to resolve these concerns first with their employer, but will be protected from victimisation if in the last resort they have to take their concerns to an outside body. The Act updates the Employment Rights Act 1996. Its content is designed to protect workers against loss or sacking for raising concerns in the public interest.

Two outside bodies have been identified by HHG as possible routes for identifying concerns and wrongdoing, where addressing such concerns with HHG themselves would be inappropriate or has been unsuccessful. These are Public Concern at Work, and Sharon Stacey.

Public Concern at Work is an independent charity that will give impartial advice.

Sharon Stacey is employed by HBBC as Chief Officer (Housing, Community Safety and Partnerships). HBBC is an organization not linked in ownership or operation in any way to HHG.

## **Agreement with Sharon Stacey**

The Agreement with Sharon Stacey is not a legally binding contract, and HHG understand that Sharon Stacey will not be held responsible or to blame for any action that may arise from any whistleblowing that may be channelled through this route. Sharon Stacey agrees to provide this service to HHG at no cost.

Sharon Stacey has agreed to be a named external contact to HHG, whom individuals connected with Hinckley Homeless group can contact in connection with raising appropriate concerns. Sharon Stacey has the right to withdraw from this arrangement at any time, on the understanding that they inform Hinckley Homeless group that this is the case.

The agreement is purely to provide a local, external, independent method for concerns to be expressed where these cannot be dealt with in house, or where concerns have been raised previously with HHG and an individual feels that they have not been dealt with appropriately or within a reasonable timescale.

## **The Whistle-blowing Policy**

HHG are committed to high standards of equality, openness and accountability. The policy and its associated procedure enables staff, volunteers and residents of any of the group's projects to raise concerns about malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.

This Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the Group itself are at risk.

Staff, Volunteers and Residents are reminded in the Policy that the operation of this Policy and Procedure does not remove their responsibility to ensure that HHG is not maliciously brought into public disrepute. Common and criminal law in relation to slander, defamation and libel will still apply, as do the Group's disciplinary procedures.

## **Whistleblowing responsibility**

The responsibility for the development, review, monitoring and approval of the Whistleblowing policy rests with HHG Management Committee.

## **Actions on Sharon Stacey**

The specific Actions requested by HHG to be undertaken by Sharon Stacey are as follows:-

1. On receipt of a whistle-blowing concern regarding HHG, Sharon Stacey should make every effort to verify that this is a genuine concern and that the reasons for contacting Sharon instead of HHG are valid.

2. If Sharon Stacey feels that the concerns could be dealt with in house by HHG, she should suggest that the individual(s) raise the concerns using the appropriate Complaints or Whistleblowing procedure directly with HHG.
3. That Sharon Stacey makes a concise factual record of the nature of the issue in writing, especially if the issue cannot be dealt with internally by HHG. This record should include dates and times of the issues being raised and dates and times of any contact with any organisations (Including HHG) made as a result of the concern being raised.
4. If the issue concerns allegations of any abuse, or criminal activity including criminal negligence or misappropriation of funds or grants by HHG, the Police and other relevant authorities should be contacted and informed without delay.
5. In most cases, if considered appropriate, a representative of HHG Management Committee (who may be the Chair or the HHG Management Committee Member designated for Whistleblowing) should be advised that an issue has been raised with Sharon Stacey. Contact details for the members of this committee are held in the offices at Lawrence House which staff can access. Sharon Stacey should not disclose the reason for the contact to staff or residents at Lawrence House, Tel (01455) 890688
6. Sharon Stacey should gather as much information as possible regarding any issue, without expending unreasonable time and effort in doing so. Without satisfactory response from HHG Management Committee, where they have been involved, this information should be then be passed to Public Concern at Work.

### **Important considerations**

At all times, volunteers or employees of HHG, and residents of Lawrence House, are encouraged to raise issues directly with the Project Manager or Management Committee. Only in rare and exceptional circumstances should there be a need to go directly to Sharon Stacey or other external bodies.

Any whistleblower should be considered as a witness rather than a complainant.

Employees, volunteers and residents are encouraged to raise issues when they are just a concern, rather than waiting for proof or to conduct evidence gathering investigations themselves.

If Employees, volunteers or residents are unsure as to what constitutes inappropriate conduct, they should ask the Project Manager or Management Committee members before things become an issue.

Victimising people who raise genuine concerns is a disciplinary offence. Raising an untrue concern maliciously is a disciplinary offence.

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**Whistleblowing Policy related documents.**

- Hinckley Homeless Group - Staff Whistleblowing Policy (LH00036)
- Hinckley Homeless Group - Staff Whistleblowing Procedure (LH00035)
- Hinckley Homeless Group - Staff Complaint / Grievance Procedure (LH00016)
- Hinckley Homeless Group - Confidentiality Policy (LH00024)
- Hinckley Homeless Group - Confidentiality Guidance (LH00023)
- Hinckley Homeless Group – Residents’ Rights, Complaints and Appeals Procedure (LH00059)
- Hinckley Homeless Group - Resident Whistleblowing Procedure (LH00191)