



Whistleblowing Policy

The purpose of this policy is to help the trustees and volunteers to raise any serious concerns they may have about any member of the group with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

The Fix it Group 23 is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the trustees and those volunteering with or associated with the group.

It is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects employees who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

What types of concerns?

The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:

Examples of bullying or harassing behaviour include:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a failure in the protection of children or vulnerable adults
- a miscarriage of justice
- a health and safety risk to an individual
- damage to the environment
- concealment of the above

It is not necessary for individuals who raise the concern to prove the wrongdoing that is alleged to have occurred or is likely to occur.

However if an individual knowingly or maliciously makes an untrue allegation (eg: in order to cause disruption with the group), we will take appropriate disciplinary action against them. It may constitute gross misconduct.

Individuals should note that they will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

This policy does not deal with any complaints volunteers may have about their volunteering agreement. The group's Bullying and Harassment policy offers protection to workers against harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Volunteers and visitors should make complaints or raise other concerns through the Complaints Procedure.

How to raise a concern

The trustee designated to handle whistleblowing concerns is the Chairperson, John Fitzgerald, and shall be known as the Whistleblowing Officer. If the matter concerns the Whistleblowing Officer, it should be raised with one of the other trustees.

Individuals should raise their concerns with the Whistleblowing Officer.

Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns in writing where possible, setting out the background and history of their concerns (giving names, dates and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for their concerns.

If any individual is unsure whether to use this procedure or they want independent advice at any stage, they should contact Public Concern at Work, the independent charity, who will be able to advise on how and with whom to raise a concern about malpractice.

Disclosures made to a legal advisor in the course of obtaining legal advice will be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Protecting the individual raising the concern

If an individual raises a concern which they believe to be true, The Fix it Group 23 will take appropriate action to protect the individual from any harassment, victimisation or bullying. Anyone who raises a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their position with the group, nor will it influence any unrelated action.

The matter will be treated confidentially if the individual requests it and their name or position will not be revealed without their permission unless the group has to do so by law. If in other circumstances the concern cannot be resolved without revealing the individual's identity, the Whistleblowing Officer will discuss with the individual whether and how to proceed.

Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective but the Whistleblowing Officer will decide whether or not to consider the matter taking into account:

- the seriousness of the matter;
- whether the concern is believable;
- whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

How the group will deal with the concern

How the concern will be dealt with, will depend on what it involves. It is likely that further enquiries and/or investigation will be necessary. The concern may be investigated by the group's Whistleblowing Officer, the trustees, or it may be referred to the police, other agencies such as Social Services, an external auditor or an independent investigator.

It may be necessary for the individual to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings.

The group will give the individual feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed. Volunteers will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and their confidentiality will continue to be protected.

Key Contacts

Role	Name	Contact Details
Chairperson/ Whistleblowing Officer	John Fitzgerald	fitzyjaz@googlemail.com / 07738 236390
Legal Helpline	Public Concern at Work	helpline@pcaw.co.uk / 020 7404 6609

Guidance

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Version Control - Approval and Review

This policy was adopted by The Fix it Group 23, a community interest organisation.

Version Number	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board of Trustees	Nov 2024	Initial draft approved.	Annually