

Speak Up – Whistleblowing Policy

1. Policy

Future Directions CIC takes allegations of wrongdoing, or malpractice (in any form) very seriously and therefore seeks to ensure that employees, who genuinely believe that wrongdoing is evident, are able to disclose the information without fear of detriment or victimisation, and in confidence. All employees are encouraged to be open about their concerns, and to express them at the earliest opportunity.

2. What concerns can I raise?

You can raise a concern about risk, malpractice or wrongdoing you think is harming the service to the People We Support. Some examples may include (but are by no means restricted to):

- unsafe care for the People We Support
- unsafe working conditions, breaching the H&S of any individual
- inadequate or lack of staff training
- criminal offences
- breach of legal obligations
- A bullying culture (across a team or organisation rather than individual instances of bullying).

Please note that if you are a healthcare professional you may have a professional duty to report a concern.

You don't need to wait for evidence. We would like you to raise the matter while it is still a concern, to give us the opportunity to rectify this at the earliest opportunity. It doesn't matter if you turn out to be mistaken as long as you are genuinely concerned.

3. Feel safe to raise your concern

If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of comeback as a result. The company will not tolerate the ill treatment or victimisation of anyone raising a concern.

We will not tolerate any attempt to bully you into not raising any such concern. Any such behaviour is a breach of our values as an organisation and, if upheld following investigation, could result in disciplinary action. Provided you are acting honestly, it doesn't matter if you are mistaken or if there is an explanation for your concerns.

4. Confidentiality

We are a supportive company and hope you feel comfortable in raising concern's openly. We also appreciate that you may want to raise concerns confidentially. This means that while you are willing for your identity to be known to the person you report your concern to, you do not want anyone else to know your identity. Therefore, we will keep your identity confidential, if that is what you want, unless required to disclose it by law (for example, by the police). You can choose to raise your concern anonymously, but that may make it more difficult for us to investigate thoroughly and give you feedback on the outcome.

5. Procedure for Raising Concerns

In many circumstances the easiest and quickest way to get your concern resolved will be to raise it formally or informally with your Team or Operational Network Manager. If you don't think it is appropriate to do this, you can use any of the options set out below in the first instance.

- Another manager who you feel comfortable raising your concerns with
- A senior manager – numbers are published on the telephone list
- Via the whistleblowing phone line on 07791 505 930. This number is published on the website and on person supported and family leaflets.

All these people are experienced in receiving concerns and will give you information about where you can go for more support. The company hopes that people feel safe and supported to disclose internally, however, employees who are concerned about wrongdoing or failures can make disclosures to an external body related to the disclosure being made. These are known as prescribed bodies or persons and details of these can be found at www.direct.gov.uk.

5.1. How do I raise concerns?

You can raise your concerns with any of the people listed above in person, by phone or in writing (including email). Whichever way, please be ready to explain as fully as you can the information and circumstances around your concern.

5.2. What will the company do?

We will treat you with respect at all times and will thank you for raising your concerns. We will discuss your concerns with you to ensure we understand exactly what you are concerned about. We are committed to listening to our staff, learning lessons and improving care for the People We Support. On receipt the concern will be recorded and you will receive an acknowledgement. This will document the date the concern was received, whether you have requested confidentiality, a summary of the concerns and dates.

5.3. Investigation

Where you have been unable to resolve the matter quickly (usually within a few days) with your line manager, we will carry out a proportionate investigation; using someone independent and we will reach a conclusion within a reasonable timescale and keep you updated at regular intervals.

The investigation will be objective and evidence-based, and will produce a report that focuses on identifying and rectifying any issues, and learning lessons to prevent problems recurring. We may decide that your concern would be better looked at under another process; for example, our process for dealing with bullying and harassment or grievance. If so, we will discuss this with you. Any employment issues identified during the investigation will be considered separately.

6. What happens next?

The focus of the investigation will be on improving the service we provide for the People We Support. Where improvements are recommended these will be actioned to ensure necessary changes are made, and are working effectively. Lessons will be shared with stakeholders across the organisation, or more widely, as appropriate.

6.1. Who is this information shared with?

The board will be given high level information about all concerns raised by our staff through this policy and what we are doing to address any problems. The board supports staff raising concerns and wants you to feel free to speak up.