
POLICY: WHISTLEBLOWING

1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the duty of every member of staff and volunteer to speak up about genuine concerns in relation to criminal activity, breach of a legal obligation (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law), miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, bullying or harassment and the reasonable suspicion that the malpractice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur. Staff and volunteers who raise concerns reasonably and responsibly under this procedure will not be penalised in any way.

2. WHO THIS POLICY IS FOR?

This policy is for people employed by or volunteering with Julian House. For the purposes of this policy only, this is someone who is:

- A Julian House employee
- On secondment to Julian House
- On a temporary contract or employed through an agency to work for Julian House
- An independent consultant for Julian House
- A volunteer with Julian House including Board Members
- Contractors and suppliers of services to Julian House

Julian House expects Board Members, employees and volunteers to operate within high standards of business and personal ethics whenever delivering their duties and responsibilities and takes seriously allegations that any individual has not acted with honesty, integrity and/or in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Any individual who has genuine concerns or reasonable suspicions of malpractice has an obligation to report in accordance with this whistle-blowing policy. Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper act.

Reports of concerns, and investigation pertaining thereto, shall be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

To ensure that this policy is adhered to, and to assure everyone that the concern will be taken seriously, Julian House will:

- Not allow the person raising the concern to be victimised for doing so
- Treat victimisation of whistle-blowers as a serious matter that can lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal
- Not attempt to conceal evidence of poor or unacceptable practice

- Take disciplinary action if an employee destroys or conceals evidence of poor or unacceptable practice or misconduct
- Ensure confidentiality clauses in employment contracts do not restrict, forbid or penalise whistleblowing
- Liaise with the other organisations (see section below) to whom staff report malpractice

4. REPORTING PROCEDURE

Julian House encourages complaints, reports, or inquiries about illegal practices or serious violations of any of our policies, including illegal or improper conduct by its leadership, or by others on its behalf.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing and this should include full details and, if possible, supporting evidence. They should state that they are using the Whistleblowing Policy and specify whether they wish their identity to be kept confidential.

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future.

Where confidentiality has been requested, Julian House will do its best to protect an employee's identity. They must however appreciate that an investigation process may lead to the source of information being revealed in a statement which may be required as part of the evidence, but they will be informed if this is to happen.

It is recognised that for some individuals, raising a concern under this procedure may be a daunting and difficult experience. To ease that burden, an individual may choose to be accompanied or represented by a friend or colleague at any stage of this procedure.

4.1. Employees

Employees should take their concerns to their line manager in the first instance at the earliest opportunity. If they do not feel that this is the appropriate person, because the line manager is involved in the malpractice in some way, they should approach the HR Business Partner, or if their concern is related to the HR Business Partner, they should contact the Chief Executive. If they do not feel comfortable approaching any of the above, they should email the chair of the board of trustees: chair@julianhouse.org.uk

4.2. Board Members and others

Board Members, volunteers, independent consultants as well as contractors and suppliers should submit concerns in writing directly to the chair of the board of trustees: chair@julianhouse.org.uk

4.3. Anonymous reporting

Julian House recognises that anonymous allegations might be made. All allegations will be investigated whether made anonymously or as part of the Whistleblowing procedure. Employees should, however, be mindful that anonymous allegations are extremely difficult to investigate, and that anonymity could delay and impede remedial action.

5. HANDLING OF REPORTED VIOLATIONS

The person to which the concerns have been raised will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the concern within 2 business days, if possible. It may not be possible to acknowledge receipt of anonymously submitted concerns.

All reports of malpractice will be promptly investigated by the person to which the concerns have been raised. They will establish and record the basis of the concerns and determine what further actions are required. If warranted by the investigation, any appropriate corrective action will be recommended to the Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees with implementation tracked formally in meeting minutes.

Unless these individuals are involved in the malpractice in some way, the HR Business Partner, the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Board of Trustees will be informed of all reported disclosures and the actions being taken as soon as reasonably possible. They may also support the staff member to which the concerns have been raised to ensure a proper and thorough process is followed.

The individual raising the concern will be advised of the outcome of the investigation as soon as possible, normally within two weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the member of staff will be informed in writing.

6. FURTHER CONSIDERATION

If an individual is not satisfied with the response received and any subsequent action taken, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chief Executive and/ or Chair of the Board of Trustees who will arrange any further investigation as he/she thinks appropriate. The Chief Executive and/or Chair of the Board of Trustees will send a written response to the individual concerned.

If an employee makes an allegation with reasonable belief but it is not confirmed by investigation, no action will be taken against them.

However, if it appears that there are clear grounds to suggest that they may have acted frivolously, or maliciously Julian House will undertake disciplinary investigation which in the case of a serious malicious or deliberately false allegation might result in dismissal for gross misconduct.

7. INDEPENDENT ADVICE, SUPPORT AND FURTHER READING

Julian House invests in the Employee Assistance Programme with Simply Health, where confidential counselling and support can be sought. The name of the person contacting the service will not be disclosed to Julian House.

Employees who feel unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice can contact the independent charity Protect (<https://protect-advice.org.uk/>). Their lawyers can give free confidential advice on how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

Free information and advice can also be obtained from;

- Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) [Whistleblowing at work | Acas](#)

You may feel that it is more appropriate to report a matter to another organisation. Other organisations concerned with standards in the voluntary sector include:

- The Charity Commission; [online form](#)
- Health & Safety Executive – contact on-line; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.htm>