



*Unleash the Creative Spirit of Young People*

## Music Relief Foundation

# Whistleblowing procedure

Organisation	MRF
Scope of policy	Applies to all staff and volunteers and all services, activities, training and general running of the organisation.
Policy operational date	01/15/2019
Policy prepared by	Olga Shaumyan (Administrator)
Reviewed/Amended	05/04/2021
Review date	05/04/2022 (every year or sooner if required)
Distributing	This policy will be available on the MRF website and staff shared drive. It will be a requirement for all trustees and staff to read the policy after appointment or after its review. A summary of all relevant policies will be included in the volunteer handbook with clear signposting to the full text. Volunteers will be kept up to date with any changes that might affect their role.

### When to raise a concern

Whistleblowing is when someone reports wrongdoing on the basis that it is in the public interest for the wrongdoing to be brought to light. This is usually something they've seen at work but not always. The wrongdoing might have happened in the past, be happening now, or be something the whistleblower is concerned may happen in the near future. Staff and volunteers must feel confident about challenging the behaviour of others and voicing concerns.

MRF is committed to the highest possible standards of:

- openness and inclusiveness,
- accountability,
- integrity in-line with that commitment.

The aims of the whistle-blowing procedure are to:

- encourage those working for MRF to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- provide guidance on how to raise concerns.
- reassure those raising concerns that they are able to raise genuine concerns 'made in the public interest' without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.



MRF will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate personal support is offered both to an employee raising a concern and to any employee against whom allegations have been made under this procedure.

‘Whistle-blowing’ is defined as ‘raising concerns about misconduct within an organisation’. In the legislation it is called a protected disclosure. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees from suffering a detriment in their employment or being dismissed by their employer if they make disclosures in accordance with the legislation.

An employee has certain common-law confidentiality obligations to their employer. However, in a limited set of circumstances whistle-blowing may override these obligations if an employee reveals information about their employment or the work on the project. This guidance sets out the circumstances under which these disclosures may lawfully be made.

A concern must relate to something which:

- is a breach of MRF policies; or
- falls below established standards or practice; or
- amounts to improper conduct, including something that may be
  - o a breach of the law,
  - o a failure to comply with a legal obligation,
  - o a possible miscarriage of justice,
  - o a Health & Safety risk,
  - o damaging the environment,
  - o misuse of public money,
  - o corruption or unethical conduct,
  - o abuse of children, young people or other users,
  - o deliberate concealment of any of these matters,
  - o any other substantial and relevant concern.

Again, these issues could have arisen in the past, be currently happening or likely to happen in the future. The law does not protect an employee who would be breaking the law in making the disclosure.

## **How to raise a concern**

All concerns will be treated sensitively and with due regard to confidentiality and where possible every effort will be made to protect your identity if you so wish. Nevertheless, this information will need to be passed on to those with a legitimate need to have this information and it may be necessary for you to provide a written statement or act as a witness in any subsequent disciplinary proceedings or enquiry. This will always be discussed with you first.

STEP 1.

If you wish to raise a concern you should normally raise it with your line manager. This can be done in person or in writing. We recognise that sometimes it may be inappropriate for you to approach your line manager with your concern. In these circumstances, a number of alternatives are available depending on the nature of your concern. You can contact any board member or other senior staff member. Or report your concern by telephoning the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board 0208 604 7275, police 101, or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or by emailing NSPCC on [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of your concerns, you will need to demonstrate that you have sufficient evidence or other reasonable ground to raise them.

#### STEP 2

The person with whom you have raised your concern will acknowledge its receipt as soon as possible and will write to you within 10 days to let you know how your concern will be dealt with. The information you can then expect to receive is:

- an indication of how the concern will be dealt with
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- whether any initial enquiries have been made
- whether further investigations will take place, and if not why not
- Information about support available for you

The person with whom you have raised your concern will at the same time notify the management.

#### STEP 3

Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate. Where an investigation is necessary, it may take the form of one or more of the following:

- an internal investigation by the management, which may, for example, take the form of a disciplinary investigation,
- a referral to Local Safeguarding or the police,
- the setting up of an external independent inquiry.

#### STEP 4

You will be informed of the outcome of any investigation, in writing, as well as of any action taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law. If you feel that your concern has not been addressed adequately, you may raise it with an independent body such as one of the following as appropriate:

- Croydon Safeguarding Children Board **0208 604 7275**
- your trade union (if you belong to one),
- the Citizen's Advice Bureau,



- a relevant voluntary organisation (e.g. NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on **0800 028 0285** or by e-mailing NSPCC on [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)),
- the police **101**,
- the local government ombudsman,
- Equality and Human Rights Commission.

You must make a disclosure ‘in the public interest’, and in the circumstances it must be reasonable for you to make the disclosure. If there is an issue of an exceptionally serious nature which you believe to be substantially true, then you may disclose the issue to someone other than those listed above. In determining whether it is reasonable for you to have made a disclosure, the identity of the person to whom the disclosure is made will be taken into account. Disclosures to anyone outside of the recognised bodies specified may not be protected disclosures under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

You have a duty to MRF not to disclose confidential information. This does not prevent you from seeking independent advice at any stage or from discussing the issue with the charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 and [www.pcaaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaaw.co.uk) in accordance with the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.