



Whistle Blowing Policy
Essex Foster Carers Association

Valid until October 2023

1 Introduction

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is aimed at helping employees to speak out about any perceived malpractice within the workplace.

Staff are expected to act with the highest levels of honesty and integrity in all that they do. However, there may be occasions when an individual believes that events have taken place which could lead to EFCA reputation being compromised. Such events include criminal behaviour, breach of Rules of Conduct, financial regulations or health and safety rules.

2 Raising a concern

EFCA encourages its Trustees and staff to raise any genuine concerns with the Chair or Vice Chair.

Personal grievances should be raised through EFCA grievance procedure.

No individual will be victimised or suffer any reprisals as a result of raising a genuine concern.

It is not necessary to have firm evidence of any wrongdoing before raising a concern.

3 Investigation

The Chair or Vice Chair will meet with the individual to establish the facts genuine. The Chair or his trustee's representative on the Board will be responsible for investigating the concern and will seek advice, including professional advice as appropriate.

The person raising the concern will be kept informed of the progress of the investigations.

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

If staff feel their concerns are not being dealt with properly, or are being ignored, they can ask to be heard by another EFCA Trustee.

4 Confidentiality

All information will be treated in confidence as far as it is possible to do so. Staff are encouraged to give their name when raising concerns as information given anonymously can be difficult to investigate.

During the investigation every effort will be made to find independent and separate evidence. However, circumstances may arise where an investigation cannot be concluded or progressed any further unless the individual is prepared to have their name cited in

discussions. In such a situation, consent would always be obtained prior to any action being taken. If consent is refused, the EFCA Board of trustee's reserves the right in some circumstances to continue with the investigation.

5. Following the investigation

EFCA recognises that there are two sides to every story; employees will be thanked for raising the matter, even if the concern proves to be mistaken.

- Staff will be respected and legitimate employee concerns about their own position or career will be listened to
- Staff will receive feedback about the outcome of any enquiry and any remedial action proposed to be taken.
- Staff need to be aware that victimising people who raise genuine concerns is a disciplinary offence.
- Raising an untrue allegation maliciously is a disciplinary offence.