



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Introduction

This policy outlines the process for raising a concern about the behaviour of a Soundabout colleague, member of staff, volunteer, practitioner or trustee, and the procedure that will be followed in the event of an allegation of this nature.

What is covered in this policy

This policy covers the process of making an allegation of harmful, unprofessional, abusive, threatening, neglectful or otherwise damaging behavior regarding a member of the Soundabout team. This includes volunteers, freelance practitioners, members of staff and trustees.

A whistleblower can come from within or outside of the organisation and this policy outlines the different ways a complaint of this nature can be raised.

Outside of the scope of this policy are the following complaints, which are dealt with the procedures below:

- Staff's complaints about their employment. These complaints are dealt with through our Grievance Procedure
- Customers' complaints about our services. These complaints are dealt with through our Complaints Procedure
- Safeguarding concerns should be raised directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy

How to raise a concern – internal

Internal colleagues should first raise your concern in writing giving as much information as possible - including any relevant names, dates and places. This should be sent to your manager, or if your manager is involved in the allegation, to a member of the senior management team, CEO or chair of Trustees via the email Trustees@soundabout.org.uk. (Please note this email is also accessible to the CEO).

We will treat the email in confidence until and unless you give your permission for us to do otherwise, or if required to disclose it to the police or another external body.

Your manager will arrange to speak to you in person at a mutually convenient time, where they will raise any pertinent questions that are relevant to the actions needed to be taken, that were not covered by the email.

It is your right to ask for a friend, a member of your trade union/professional body to be present at this meeting.

How to raise a concern – external

Families and external professionals (including school staff and carers) will be made aware of Soundabout's whistleblowing policy when they book community and training sessions.

External stakeholders including former team members, families, beneficiaries, professionals, fundraisers and other supporters of the charity can raise a concern via the CONTACT page on the website - <https://www.soundabout.org.uk/about-us/contact/>

You have the choice of making the allegation directly to the charity team info@soundabout.org.uk or directly to Trustees via trustees@soundabout.org.uk.

Your concern or allegation should be made in writing giving as much information as possible - including any relevant names, dates, places.

We will treat the email in confidence until and unless you give your permission for us to do otherwise, or if required to disclose it to the police or another external body.

How we will respond

We understand that deciding to blow the whistle is not easy.

Soundabout will take appropriate action to protect you from any harassment, victimisation or bullying as a result of this action. We will keep your concern confidential if requested to do so and will not reveal your name or position without your permission or if required to do so by law.

We would explain this at the time you raise an allegation so you can decide how you would like to proceed.

If you work for Soundabout you should also know that any allegation you make will not influence, or be influenced by, any unrelated disciplinary action against you or any redundancy procedures that may affect you.

Next steps

The manager who you have raised the allegation to will seek out external HR expertise via the Cranfield Trust (or similar) to decide whether an investigation should be launched.

Your concern may subsequently be investigated by senior management or trustees depending on its severity, or we may refer it to:

- The police
- Other agencies (for example, to MASH if it involves the abuse of children or vulnerable adults)
- Our external auditor; or
- An independent investigator

We may be able to settle some concerns without carrying out an investigation. If we need to take urgent action, we will do this before carrying out any investigation.

Timescales

Within 10 working days of you raising a concern, the person dealing with the matter will:

- Acknowledge that we have received your concern
- Explain the next steps; and
- Tell you what support is available to you

If you need to have a meeting, you can be accompanied by a friend or a representative from a trade union or professional association.

Our commitment to you

We will take steps to reduce any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you need to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, we will arrange for you to get professional advice on the procedure.

We will give you feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation and detail the next steps and timescales that you can expect.

Details of any concerns raised will be kept confidential by Soundabout and will not be placed on your personal file.