



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, HAYDON WICK

WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

The PCC has adopted this policy and the accompanying procedure on whistleblowing to enable staff, volunteers, members of our congregations and others who use the church premises, to raise concerns internally and in a confidential fashion about fraud, malpractice, health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, failure to comply with legal obligations and/or unethical conduct. The policy also provides if necessary, for such concerns to be raised outside the local church organisation.

Elements of the policy

The PCC's policy on whistleblowing is intended to demonstrate that the PCC:

- Will not tolerate malpractice;
- Respects the confidentiality of those raising concerns and will provide procedures to maintain confidentiality so far as is consistent with progressing the issues effectively;
- Will ensure that individuals raising a concern in good faith will not suffer reprisal for having done so, whether it is upheld or not;
- Will provide the opportunity to raise concerns outside the normal line management structure where is appropriate;
- Will invoke the PCC's disciplinary policy and procedure in the case of deliberately false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous allegations;
- Will provide a clear and simple procedure for raising concerns; which is accessible to all members of staff/volunteers.

Procedure

This procedure is separate from the PCC's adopted procedures regarding grievances.

- Employees/volunteers should not use this procedure to raise grievances about their personal employment situation;
- This procedure is to enable staff, volunteers and others to express a legitimate concern regarding suspected malpractice within the church and/or PCC;
- Malpractice is not easily defined; however, it includes allegations of fraud, financial irregularities, corruption, bribery, dishonesty, acting contrary to the staff code of ethics, criminal activities, failing to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, and creating or ignoring a serious risk to health, safety or the environment.



Confidentiality

Those who wish to raise a concern under this procedure are entitled to have the matter treated confidentially and their name will not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator of malpractice without their prior approval. It may be appropriate, to preserve confidentiality, that concerns are raised orally rather than in writing, although individuals are encouraged to express their concern in writing wherever possible. If there is evidence of criminal activity then the Police will in all cases be informed.

The Investigation

- A member of staff, volunteer, member of our congregations and others who use the church premises will be at liberty to express their concern to the PCC Secretary;
- Any concern raised will be investigated thoroughly and in a timely manner, and appropriate corrective action will be pursued. The member of staff/volunteer making the allegation will be kept informed of progress and, whenever possible and subject to third party rights, will be informed of the Resolution;
- A member of staff/volunteer who is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with will have a right to raise it, in confidence, with the Members of the PCC.

External Procedures

Where all other internal procedures have been exhausted, a member of staff/volunteer shall have a right of access to Members of the PCC.

It should be noted that under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, there are circumstances where individuals may be entitled to raise a concern directly with an external body where the individual reasonably believes:

- That exceptionally serious circumstances justify it;
- That the PCC would conceal or destroy the relevant evidence;
- Where they believe they would be victimised by the PCC;
- Where the Secretary of State has ordered it.

In particular, if the Secretary of the PCC is the subject of the concern, then it can be raised with other members of the PCC, the Incumbent, or directly with the Diocese of Bristol (via the Archdeacons, Human Resources or Safeguarding contacts at <https://www.bristol.anglican.org/staff-directory/>).

Policy Date: 28th January 2019
Version Number: 1.1
Review Frequency: Every Two years
Due for review: Third Quarter 2020



Malicious Accusations

Deliberately false, malicious, vexatious or frivolous accusations will be dealt with under the PCC's Disciplinary Procedure.

Protection from Reprisal or Victimisation

No member of staff/volunteer will suffer detriment, reprisal or be disciplined for raising a genuine and legitimate concern, providing that they do so in good faith and following the Whistle-blowing procedures.