

Whistleblowing and Allegation Management Policy

Principles

Mentoring Plus is committed to ensuring that we meet the highest standards for propriety, delivery of services, protection of our staff, volunteers, young people and members of the public.

We encourage staff and volunteers to bring any issues to the attention of the CEO for resolution. However, there will be occasions where this is not possible e.g. where the accuser wishes for confidentiality or there is potential involvement of key individuals within the charity. The “whistleblowing” procedure set out below may be used by all staff and volunteers who wish to raise matters in confidence.

All allegations are treated seriously and objectively, dealt with in a timely manner, and full and accurate records are kept.

All staff, freelancers and volunteers are made aware of this policy, the responsible officers and the steps to be taken to follow these procedures if they have a concern that a person may have behaved inappropriately, or have received information that may constitute an allegation.

1. When to use this policy

- 1.1 Our highest priority is the welfare of young people, and this policy is focused on allegations about harm or potential harm to young people. It should therefore be read together with our Child Protection Policy.
- 1.2 Members of staff who have issues relating to their own employment rather than issues affecting our operations generally should use our Grievance Procedure as stated in the Staff Handbook.
- 1.3 Members of the public, volunteers and clients would normally use Mentoring Plus’ Complaints Procedure to raise issues of concern to them e.g.:
 - a. the quality or effectiveness of service delivery
 - b. financial mismanagement or impropriety
 - c. health and safety
 - d. ethics
 - e. misuse of assets
 - f. inappropriate use of IT equipment
 - g. bullying and/or harassment

However, in the circumstances set out above e.g. requiring confidentiality, the Whistleblowing Procedure may also be used about this type of issue. Please see process flowchart (Appendix 1)

2. Responsible officers

- 2.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is currently Helen Goodchild, and Humphrey Pain is Deputy Safeguarding (DSG), in the case of absence.
- 2.2 The Designated Trustee for child protection is currently Karen John.

- 2.3 The Trustee to whom reports of issues listed in 1.3 should be made is the Chair, currently Dr Karen John.

3. Essential steps

- 3.1 If a child has clearly been injured and/or there is clear evidence of significant harm or risk of significant harm, make immediate contact with the police or social care or emergency services.

Otherwise individuals should:

- 3.2 Report the incident to the appropriate officer in person, by phone or email¹ as soon as possible, however trivial it may seem
- 3.3 Make a signed and dated written record of your concerns using the form at the end of this document, Appendix 2
- 3.4 Maintain confidentiality.

Individuals must not:

- 3.5 Attempt to deal with the situation yourself
- 3.6 Make assumptions, express opinions, offer alternative explanations or diminish the seriousness of the behaviour or alleged incidents
- 3.7 Keep the information to yourself or promise confidentiality
- 3.8 Take any action that might undermine any future investigation.

All of these steps should also be followed if the allegation is about harm or a significant issue concerning a child or young person that has taken place in the past.

4. Allegation Management by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- 4.1 When a report is made to the DSL about issues concerning a child, it will be clear in some cases that an immediate referral must be made to social care or the police for investigation, as a child appears to have been harmed or is at risk of significant harm or a criminal act appears to have been committed.

Otherwise and in addition the DSL will:

- 4.2 Report any allegation concerning children and/or young people at the earliest opportunity to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and co-operate fully with them in the investigation carried out and steps recommended.
- 4.3 In the situation above, we also follow the procedures set out by the DBS office in terms of checking whether conditions have been met to disclose the matter to the DBS office, and implementing all required steps referred to. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/barring-referrals>.
DBS referral flowchart can be found in Appendix 3

Where a referral is required please use the relevant DBS Referral Form available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/barring-referrals#should-i-make-a-barring-referral>

¹ It is the responsibility of the person communicating this information to ensure the email address used is accurate, up to date, and that neither the sent nor received email is accessible by others.

- 4.4 Immediately refer any allegation of impropriety not concerning children and young people to the Board of Trustees, who will take steps in accordance with Charity Commission guidelines for managing and reporting serious incidents.
- 4.5 Collate and record information and personal details about the individuals involved.
- 4.6 Keep alert for patterns which might suggest the abuse goes further afield and involves other children and adults, reporting any findings immediately to the LADO.
- 4.7 Manage information sharing in a timely manner and in line with SWCPP (South West Child Protection Procedures) guidance - <http://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/>
- 4.8 Ensure that all records are up-to-date and include the final decisions and actions that conclude the case.
- 4.9 Make every effort while the allegation is being considered or investigated to maintain confidentiality, and guard against any publicity that may prejudice the investigation.

5. Protecting whistleblowers

Individuals using this procedure to report concerns in good faith can expect:

- 5.1 To have their identity protected at all times unless they give permission for it to be disclosed.
- 5.2 To be able to choose in exceptional circumstances to raise issues anonymously, but in the knowledge that this will make a case much harder to investigate.
- 5.3 That they will not be disciplined or criticised as a result of using the whistleblowing procedure, whatever the outcome of the investigation.

However:

- 5.4 Individuals found to have raised concerns mendaciously or frivolously are not subject to these protections.

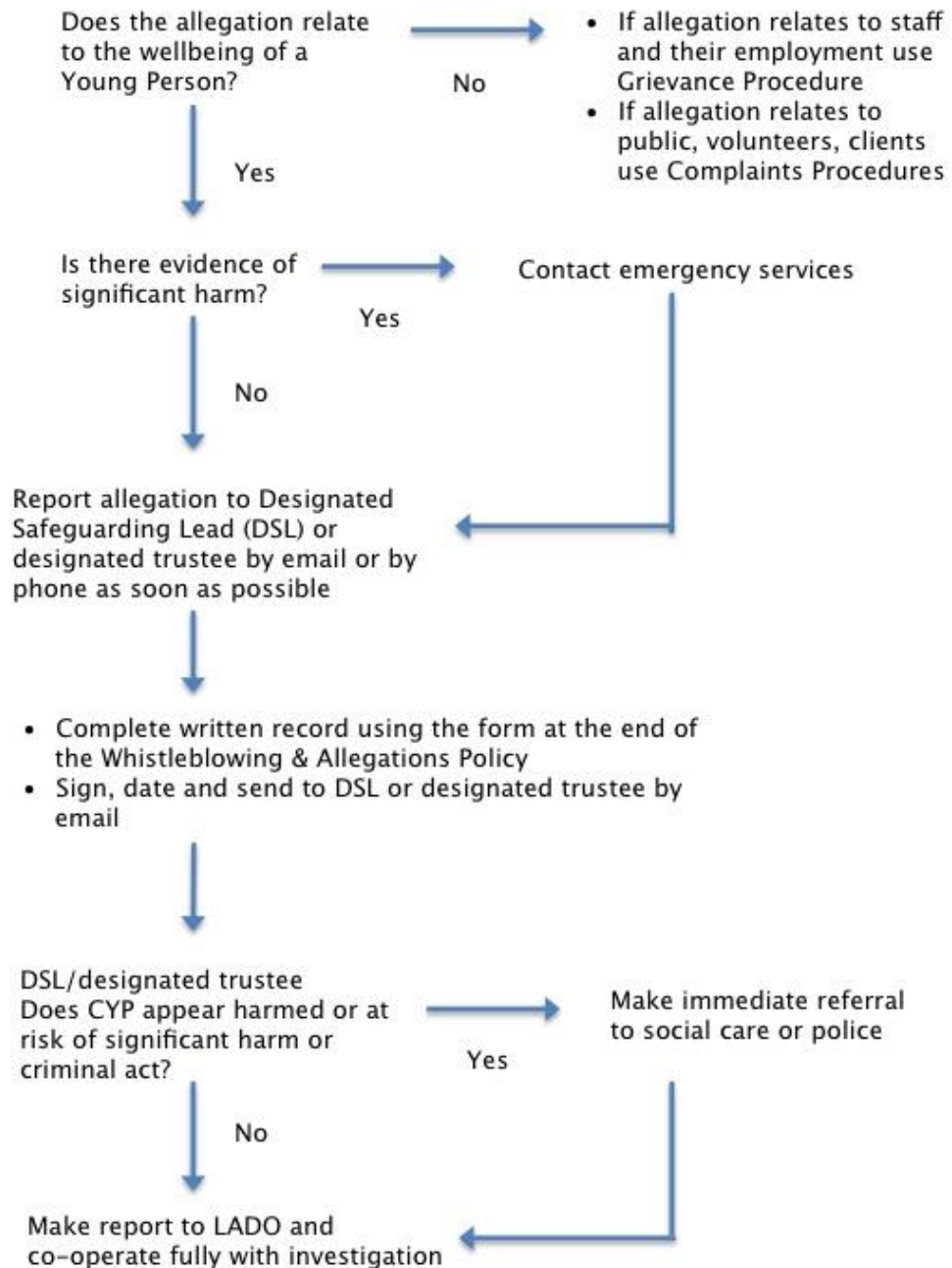
6. Reporting back to the whistleblower

- 6.1 Normally the Designated Trustee will confirm within 5 working days of the issue being advised that the matter is being appropriately investigated.
- 6.2 Normally a written response will be made to the individual raising the issue within 28 working days. This will indicate the results of the investigation and what action is being taken.
- 6.3 Serious or complex cases may take longer to investigate, and the person raising the issue will be advised if that is the case.
- 6.4 If the individual raising the concern is not satisfied with the results of the investigation or the action taken, they may request a meeting, where they can raise their concerns. If these are not resolved, they have the option to raise the matter with the Board of Trustees as a whole, with their confidentiality still protected throughout.

Helen Goodchild, DSL	01225 429694	helen.goodchild@mentoringplus.net
Humphrey Pain, Deputy DSG	01225 429694	humphrey.pain@mentoringplus.net
Dr Karen John, Chair – Complaints Procedure		chair@mentoringplus.net
Local Authority Designated Officer		01225 396810

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Next review: August 2024

Whistleblowing & Allegations Flowchart



Feedback

Designated trustee will:

- Confirm matter being appropriately investigated within 5 working days
- Send written response within 28 working days indicating the result of investigation OR that the case is complex and is taking longer

Whistleblower can request a meeting if not satisfied with the outcome/result

**Appendix 2
Allegation Recording/Reporting Form**

AN ALLEGATION IS MADE WHEN THE INFORMATION GIVEN SUGGESTS THAT A MEMBER OF STAFF HAS ACTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT CONTRAVENES THE CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

A) Details of Child/ren or Young Person/s involved with Mentoring Plus

Surname: Forename: Date of Birth:

Current Residential Address: Tel:

Caseworker:

B) DETAILS OF ALLEGATION:

Name of person against whom allegation is being made:	
Relationship of this person (s) to Child/Young Person:	
Date/time of suspected/alleged incident (s): Please state if it is believed/alleged to be ongoing?	
Location of Child/Young Person:	
Description of Allegation(s): <u>Write down what you have been told, using the exact words if possible.</u> <u>Continue overleaf if necessary.</u>	

Name of person(s) making allegation	
Were witnesses present at incident(s)?	
Name of witness present at incident(s):	

Continued....

C) FURTHER ACTION/REFERRALS:

	DATE:	HOW:	BY WHOM:	CONTACT NAME & LOCATION:
Parent/Foster Carer Notified: (if applicable)				
DSO Notified:				
Responsible Trustee Notified:				
Police Notified if required:				
Verbal Referral to LADO if required (within 24 hours)				
Written Referral to LADO if required (within 2 working days)				

AUTHORISED SIGNATURES:

Signature of person completing form:			Name: (block capitals)			Date:		
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>		
Position: <input type="text"/>			<u>PLEASE FORWARD IMMEDIATELY TO DSL and Designated Trustee</u>					
Signature of DSO:			Name: (block capitals)			Date:		
<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>		

Signature of designated Trustee:

Name: (block capitals)

Date:

Appendix 3
Barring Referral Flowchart

Barring referral flow chart

We have put together the following flow chart to help you decide if it is appropriate to refer someone to us.

