

**GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE**  
**PART 4**

## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 It is important that any concerns regarding the behaviour of any member of staff, volunteer or contractor, working on behalf of Volleyball England (the "**Organisation**") are shared with a member of the Organisation's staff. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed according to the Organisation's Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.
- 1.2 All information received and discussed will be treated in confidence and only shared with those individuals who will be able to manage and resolve the situation.
- 1.3 Individuals can raise a matter of concern without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This Policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the Organisation and blow the whistle, rather than overlook the concern.
- 1.4 It is in the interests of all concerned that any disclosure is dealt with properly, quickly and discreetly. This includes the interests of the Organisation, its employees, all registered members and any persons who are the subject of any complaint, as well as the person making the complaint.

### **2. REPORTING PROCEDURE**

- 2.1 The Organisation recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make for many reasons, including fear of reprisal from those implicated in the concern. If an individual believes what they are saying to be true, they should have nothing to fear, because in reporting their concern they will be doing their duty to the person concerned.
- 2.2 The Organisation will not tolerate any harassment, bullying or victimisation (including informal pressure) towards whistleblowers and will take appropriate action to protect individuals when they raise a concern in good faith, any such inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the Organisation's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.3 Any investigation into allegations of poor practice will not influence, or be influenced by, any disciplinary procedures that already affect individuals unless there may be a pattern of poor practice and/or abuse which requires the cases to be linked and/or dealt with together.

### **3. DISCLOSURES UNDER THIS POLICY**

- 3.1 You can make a disclosure under this Policy if you have genuine concerns relating to any of the following areas of malpractice, or suspected malpractice:

- 3.1.1 Failure to comply with any codes of conduct or values of the Organisation;
  - 3.1.2 Criminal activity;
  - 3.1.3 Practices endangering health and safety;
  - 3.1.4 Practices damaging the environment;
  - 3.1.5 Bribery;
  - 3.1.6 Financial malpractice, impropriety or fraud; and
  - 3.1.7 Attempts to conceal any of the above.
- 3.2 You are encouraged to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible. No action will be taken against you if you raise genuine concerns even if the concern you raised is not confirmed by any subsequent investigation.

#### **4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 4.1 The Organisation will do its utmost to protect the identity of the whistleblower when they raise a concern and do not want their name to be disclosed. However, it must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the whistleblower may be required as part of the evidence. They will be given prior notice of this and a chance to discuss the consequences.

#### **5. ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS**

- 5.1 The Organisation encourages the whistleblower to put their name to the allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful and may not provide all the relevant information. However, all reports will be considered at the discretion of the Organisation based on the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources or factual records.

#### **6. UNFOUNDED ALLEGATIONS**

- 6.1 If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious or frivolous allegations, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, the Organisation's Disciplinary Procedures will apply.

#### **7. USE OF THE WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY**

- 7.1 As a staff member
- 7.1.1 In the first instance, as a staff member, you should bring the matter to the attention of your immediate manager, who will inform the CEO. If the disclosure contains allegations about your immediate manager or the malpractice occurs at this level, you may make the disclosure directly to the CEO.
  - 7.1.2 If your disclosure contains allegations which you do not wish to make to the CEO you can make the disclosure to the Chair of the Board.
  - 7.1.3 If your disclosure concerns a very serious allegation the Board will be notified.
- 7.2 Volunteer concerns.

- 7.2.1 Individuals should raise the concern in the first instance with the CEO by post to the national office, marked 'private and confidential' or via email to: [complaints@volleyballengland.org](mailto:complaints@volleyballengland.org).
- 7.2.2 The individual should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation. The earlier the concern is raised, the easier it is to take action.
- 7.2.3 Although the whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the Organisation that there are sufficient grounds for their concern.
- 7.2.4 If you do not want or feel unable to report the concern to the Organisation, a number of external agencies are available for reporting purposes. These include:
- (a) The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) (Tel: 0116 234 7278/7280)
  - (b) Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)
  - (c) Local Children's Social Care
  - (d) Local Police
- 7.2.5 The action taken by the Organisation will depend on the nature of the concern.
- 7.2.6 In order to protect individuals, it is likely that the Organisation will establish a case management team in order to conduct an investigation. The amount of contact between the people considering the issues and the whistleblower will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the whistleblower as part of the investigation process.
- 7.2.7 When any meeting is arranged the whistleblower has the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by a friend or a person of their choice who is not involved in the matter to which the concern relates.
- 7.2.8 The Organisation will take steps to minimise any difficulties which individuals may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if the whistleblower is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Organisation will advise them about the procedure.
- 7.2.9 The Organisation accepts that the whistleblower needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to legal constraints, they will receive information about the outcome of any investigation, and the action that is to be taken against those whose actions caused the concern. Also, if appropriate, what policy changes are to be made to minimise the possibility of a similar concern being raised in the future.