



West Somerset Railway Association

The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard TA4 3 BX

WSRA POLICY No P14: Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose: The WSRA believes it is important that members, volunteers, donors and employees feel confident in reporting serious concerns about any aspects of WSRA's work, and that the raising of such concerns receive a swift response and that no-one is penalised for coming forward.

Whistle blowing is the term given to reporting a serious concern.

A serious concern might be;

- a criminal offence
 - bullying or victimisation
 - financial malpractice
 - a health and safety risk
 - discrimination
 - information relating to any of the above being deliberately concealed
- There may be other serious concerns, which do not fit into these categories.

Reporting a concern

- Any member, volunteer, donor or staff member can report a concern.
- Concerns can be reported verbally or in writing.
- In most circumstances this would be to the General Manager.
- If the concern involves the General Manager or it is felt they are unlikely to take any action, the person concerned contact a member of the Board of Trustees or the Chair.

What happens next

- All reported concerns will be investigated.
- Verbal concerns will be recorded in writing.
- The person to whom the concern has been reported will assess what action if any needs to be taken. This would be an internal inquiry or, where it is considered appropriate, the matters raised may be referred to the most appropriate external agency.
- In some cases, the concern may be better addressed under another policy or procedure e.g. Disciplinary Policy and Grievance Procedure.
- The person reporting the concern will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible, normally within 2 weeks of the date of their disclosure. Where a longer period is needed for investigation, the person will be informed in writing.
- Where a person is not satisfied with the outcome, they should put their concerns in writing to the Chair of the Trustees who shall take it to the Board for discussion. The Board's decision shall normally be final.

- If the person raising a concern remains unsatisfied, the WSRA recognise their right to refer the matter to the WSRA's Grievance Procedure and or if necessary the Charity Commission.

Confidentiality

- People are encouraged not to report concerns anonymously as this makes them more difficult to investigate.
- Any concerns raised will be dealt with confidentially wherever this is possible. If other organisations need to be involved, it may not be possible to conceal the source of the information.

Safeguards

- The WSRA will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect those who report a concern in good faith.
- No action will be taken against anyone who makes an allegation in good faith, reasonably believing it to be true, even if the allegation is not subsequently confirmed by the investigation.

Legal Framework

Independent advice and further reading

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees against detrimental treatment or dismissal as a result of any disclosure of normally confidential information in the interests of the public.

Staff who feel unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice can contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or email helpline@pcaw.co.uk. Their lawyers can give free confidential advice on how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

Free information and advice can also be obtained from the Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) – Telephone 08457474747.

Policy Author	Diana Ricketts-Tanner - Trustee
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