

Whistleblowing Policy

Version no.	Approved by	Date	Review
V0.1	Board of Trustees	14 July 2022	July 2024
V0.2	Board of Trustees	17 July 2024	July 2026
V0.3	Board of Trustees	July 2026	July 2028

Introduction

CPAS is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between the trustees, employees, workers and volunteers in the organisation. Tackling problems is vitally important to maintaining CPAS's purpose and objectives.

This policy aims to help employees, workers and volunteers in CPAS to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues, or anything taking place in CPAS with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

This policy is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the "Act") and other legislation which protects employees and workers who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

1. Who does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to everyone who works or volunteers for CPAS. This means employees, workers, volunteers, interns and contractors.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

'Whistleblowing' refers to the internal or external disclosure of malpractice and serious suspected wrongdoing as well as illegal acts, or omissions, at work. It covers, for example, how we raise funds, how we commission work or make payments and where there has been a breach of a legal, statutory or regulatory requirement or unethical behaviour.

3. What types of concerns are covered by this Policy?

To use this whistleblowing policy and be legally protected under the Act, you must make a disclosure about a serious concern. This is known under the Act as a 'qualifying disclosure'. This means you have information and reasonably believe that one or more of the following matters is happening, has taken place, or is likely to happen in the future:

- (a) a criminal offence (including fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, e.g. theft, fraud or malpractice)
- (b) a miscarriage of justice
- (c) an act creating risk to health and safety
- (d) an act causing damage to the environment
- (e) a breach of any other legal obligation, or
- (f) concealment of any of the above

You do not need to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. You do, however, need to hold a reasonable belief of such an action having been, being or likely to be carried out.

If you feel unable to whistleblow internally, the matter may be reported directly to the relevant regulator, such as the Charity Commission.

4. What concerns cannot be raised as whistleblowing under this policy?

This whistleblowing policy does not apply to:

- **Complaints:** A complaint that is an expression of your dissatisfaction which calls for a response. If you want to make a complaint about CPAS you should use our complaints policy.
- **Safeguarding general concerns:** For general safeguarding concerns in the first instance you should follow the process set out in the CPAS Safeguarding Policy. Contact Val Floy at vfloy@cpas.org.uk or if your concern relates to Ventures and Falcons contact Tim Friend at tfriend@cpas.org.uk. You may need to use the Whistleblowing Policy if you have raised concerns and do not think they are being taken seriously or have been covered up. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline can be used for advice and contacted on 0800 028 0285.
- **Concerns about other organisations:** If you have concerns about the behaviour of another Church of England organisation or any other organisation, you should raise them through that organisation, following any whistleblowing procedures it has.
- **Employment related concerns:** This policy does not deal with any complaints employees may have about their own employment position, which should be addressed through CPAS's grievance procedures.

5. How to raise a concern

You should raise your whistleblowing concern as soon as possible. This will make it easier to act and to enable any problems to be resolved or reported quickly.

You can make your disclosure orally but written disclosures are preferable as these will make the process more efficient and effective. In your disclosure, you should:

- (a) provide any relevant context and background, including relevant dates, venues, names etc
- (b) state clearly the reason why the situation causes concern.

You must say that you are raising your concern using the whistleblowing policy and whether you wish your identity to be kept confidential. While we will make every effort to deal with your case confidentially, depending on the circumstances of the case this may not always be possible (e.g. if the police are involved). Where this is the case, you will be informed of this and the reasons why it was not possible. We prefer non-anonymous disclosures, as anonymity often makes it difficult to properly investigate concerns, protect employees or give feedback on outcomes.

The Director of Operations and Finance is designated to handle whistleblowing concerns in CPAS and is the Whistleblowing Officer.

You should report your concern in the first instance to your line manager/volunteer co-ordinator where appropriate, or to the Whistleblowing Officer. If the matter concerns the Whistleblowing Officer, it should be raised with the Chief Executive.

If you are unsure whether to use this procedure, or you want independent advice at any stage, you should contact your trade union or an independent organisation such as Protect (contact details are below).

6. Protecting the individual raising the concern

If you raise a concern which you believe to be true, CPAS will take appropriate action to protect you from any harassment, victimisation or bullying. If you raise a genuine concern

under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job, nor will it influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures.

Any concerns raised under this policy will be treated confidentially but if the concern cannot be resolved without revealing your identity, the Whistleblowing Officer will discuss with you whether and how to proceed.

7. How will CPAS deal with the concern?

How the concern will be dealt with, will depend on what it involves. It is likely that further enquiries and/or investigation will be necessary. The concern may be investigated by the Whistleblowing Officer, through the disciplinary process or it may be referred to the police, Charity Commission, other agencies, an external auditor or an independent investigator.

Typically, the matters raised may result in one or more of the following:

- (a) no action required
- (b) action being taken under another policy or procedure
- (c) an internal investigation under this policy
- (d) a referral to the police or other relevant statutory body
- (e) a referral to CPAS's external auditors
- (f) a Serious Incident Report being made to the Charity Commission
- (g) an independent inquiry.

It may be necessary for you to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings.

The Whistleblowing Officer will give you feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation, wherever possible.

8. Allegations that are malicious or known to the individual making them to be false

If it is found that you have knowingly or maliciously made an untrue allegation or you are involved in any way in the malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal acts or omissions, CPAS will take appropriate action. Disciplinary action will not be taken against you if you raise a genuine concern that is investigated but not substantiated. Please note that it is not acceptable to use social media for any member of staff to raise concerns about CPAS.

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed and a record retained. Any person raising a concern under this policy will not suffer any detriment for raising the concern unless they are found to have made a malicious allegation.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Useful Contacts

Protect – formerly Public Concern at Work (independent charity that provides free advice for employees who wish to express concerns about fraud or other serious malpractice)

020 3117 2520

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line (safeguarding issues) – 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk