

DIOCESE OF DURHAM “WHISTLEBLOWING” POLICY

1. To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children or are required to have appropriate whistle-blowing procedures, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed.
2. Whistle-blowing may also apply to situations of unacceptable practice, performance or behaviour in situations unrelated to children or adults who may be vulnerable, and these same principles can be applied.
3. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives workers legal protection against being dismissed or penalised as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. Whilst the Act does not provide the same protection for volunteers, the Diocese of Durham adopts the same approach in their protection.
4. The policy of the Diocese of Durham is to safeguard the interests of any of its employees, Office holders or volunteers when they act as alerters regarding any neglect or abuse, mental, physical, emotional, sexual, racial/ethnic or financial, of service users or any similar abuse of colleagues.
5. The Diocese of Durham accepts that it is bound by legislation in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and guarantees that procedures will be invoked in ways which do not prejudice the “whistleblower’s” own position and prospects.
6. The Diocese of Durham will protect the employee, Office Holder or volunteer against victimisation and provide support throughout the investigation process.
7. The Diocese of Durham is committed to ensuring that employees, Office Holders and volunteers have:
 - Knowledge and understanding of protection procedures
 - Are committed to emphasising that harassment is unacceptable
 - Are enabled to identify oppressive abuse when it occurs
 - Are informed regarding their individual duty to act to protect service users
 - Are made aware of measures to safeguard their interests if they act as “whistleblowers”
 - Are made aware of their rights under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Procedure

8. The Diocese of Durham encourages employees, Office Holders and volunteers to regard it as their duty to the Diocese and their professional obligation to raise legitimate concerns about suspected misconduct by colleagues, managers or those with whom they work.
9. The Diocese of Durham sees its employees, Office Holders and Volunteers in the roles of alerters to promote the safeguarding of the rights of others, to log any concerns and report such concerns to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, the Diocesan Secretary or to the Chair of the Bishop’s Council’s Finance Group. Alerters are not being asked to verify or prove that concerns are true.
10. The Diocese of Durham undertakes to protect its employees, Office Holders and volunteers from victimisation when they act as alerters.
11. Anybody who is concerned about any malpractice but unsure whether to blow the whistle or to stay silent or are unclear about how to go about blowing the whistle may obtain free expert help from the independent charity “Public Concern at Work”, Suite 306, 16 Baldwins Gardens, London, EC1N 7RJ. Telephone: 0207 404 6609