

# HR19 Speaking Up Policy (was Whistle blowing)



## 1. Statement of Policy

Bethphage is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty, integrity and accountability. As part of this commitment, the organisation is keen that any activity which falls below these standards is reported, in order that it can be dealt with promptly. Bethphage, whilst making every effort to do things properly and deal fairly and honestly with everyone, acknowledges that there may be occasions when people we support, families, staff, external stakeholders and members of the public suspect our actions or approach have not met the standards we have adopted.

Our approach is to encourage an open culture, to reduce the risks of malpractice and through good governance we will recruit, induct, train and support all of our people and ensure everyone understands their role to Speak Up.

## 2. Introduction

Whenever possible, you should raise any concern with your manager so that the matter can be resolved internally as quickly as possible. However, the Speaking Up arrangements enable you to pass your concern on to other managers within Bethphage if necessary or if all attempts to address the concern internally fail, to refer the matter to outside organisations.

We want to encourage staff, students and volunteers to Speak Up about issues that concern you at work. You may be worried that by reporting such issues you will be opening yourself up to victimisation or detriment, or risking your job security; that is quite understandable. However, all our staff now enjoy statutory protection if concerns are raised in the right way. This policy is designed to give you that opportunity and protection. Provided you are acting in the reasonable belief that the matter is in the public interest, it does not matter if you are mistaken. There is no question of you having to prove anything.

Examples of the kind of thing which might be disclosed include something which in your reasonable belief is:

- A criminal offence
- Breach of any legal obligation
- Miscarriage of justice
- The health and safety of an individual has been or is likely to be endangered
- Damage to the environment
- Mistreatment of any person, their finances or possessions
- Misuse of the charity's resources, e.g. unauthorised use of company finances
- Any safeguarding matter
- Discrimination against anyone connected with Bethphage
- Policy breach
- Deliberate concealing, shredding or disposing of information about any of the above.

This list is not exhaustive so if there is anything that you think we should know about, please use the procedure outlined in this policy. By knowing about malpractice at an early stage, we stand a good chance of taking the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of all service users, staff and organisation.

**In short please don't hesitate to 'blow the whistle' on malpractice.**

If you see something or hear something, you should say something

### 3. Our Guarantee

The Board of Trustees and management are committed to this policy. If you use this policy to Speak Up, we give you our assurance that you will not suffer any form of retribution, victimisation or detriment. We will treat your concern seriously and act according to this policy, we will not ask you to prove anything. We will give you feedback on any investigation and be sensitive to any concerns you may have as a result of any steps taken under this procedure. However, you need to bear in mind that any information you disclose may become the subject of disciplinary proceedings and as such we cannot guarantee that the information disclosed will remain confidential. All staff and volunteers have a duty of care and it is important to remember that you are there to maintain independence and a good quality of life for the people you support. Victimising a whistleblower will lead to disciplinary action.

### 4. Procedures

Note: this policy is not our normal grievance procedure. If you have a complaint about your own personal circumstances, then you should use our normal grievance procedure. If you have concerns about **malpractice** within the organisation, then you should follow the procedure outlined below.

#### How to Speak Up internally

*1. Tell your immediate Line Manager*

If you are concerned about any form of malpractice you should normally raise the issue with your immediate (Line Manager) first. There is no special procedure for doing this – you can tell him or her about the problem or put it in writing if you prefer.

*2. If you feel unable to tell your immediate Line Manager*

If you feel you cannot tell your line manager, for whatever reason (e.g. for example the concern is about them), please raise the issue with their manager e.g. Area Manager, Deputy Chief Executive.

*3. If you still have concerns*

If you have raised your concerns, following the above, and you are still worried, or the matter is so serious that you feel you cannot discuss it with your Manager, you should raise the matter with any other manager, the Quality Manager ([feedback@bethphage.co.uk](mailto:feedback@bethphage.co.uk)) or the Chief Executive ([ceo@bethphage.co.uk](mailto:ceo@bethphage.co.uk)) or, if the issue relates to the Chief Executive, raise the concern with the Chair of the Board ([chair@bethphage.co.uk](mailto:chair@bethphage.co.uk)).

## How we will respond

Once we have received your concern we will aim to respond to you within five working days informing you of the action we will take. This will usually involve making internal enquiries first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation at a later stage that may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised. As far as possible, we will keep you informed of the decisions we take and the outcome of any enquiries and investigations we carry out. However, we will not be able to inform you of any matters which would infringe on our duty of confidentiality to others.

### 5. Speaking Up externally (exceptional cases)

The main purpose of this policy is to give you the opportunity and protection you need to raise your concerns internally, so that we can deal with them quickly. We expect that in almost all cases raising a concern internally will be the most appropriate action for you to take.

However, if you feel you cannot raise your concerns internally and honestly and reasonably believe the information and any allegations are true and in the public interest, you should consider raising the matter with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

***\* Individuals are protected when making a protected disclosure from victimisation under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) provided the disclosure is in the public interest.***

**Approved by:** Stuart Wheeler, Head of HR  
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