



# Croydon Mencap

## Whistleblowing Policy

### Version Control

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## Introduction

Croydon Mencap is committed to developing a culture where it is safe and acceptable for all employees and stakeholders to raise concerns about poor or unacceptable practice and misconduct.

A whistleblower is not a 'sneak' or a 'trouble maker' but someone who comes to a decision to raise a concern after a great deal of thought. The law only requires that there **be a genuine doubt** – the individual is not expected to produce unquestionable evidence to support the concern. Producing the evidence is up to Croydon Mencap or the organisation with whom the matter was raised.

If the concern was raised in good faith, the person raising the concern will not be at risk of losing his/her job or suffering any form of reprisal for doing so.

## Policy Statement

To ensure that this policy is adhered to, and to ensure that the concern will be taken seriously Croydon Mencap will:

- \* Not allow the person raising the concern to be victimised for doing so
- \* Treat victimisation of whistleblowers as a serious matter and take disciplinary action
- \* Not attempt to conceal evidence of poor or unacceptable practice
- \* Take disciplinary action if an employee destroys or conceals evidence of poor or unacceptable practice or misconduct

The Public Interest Disclosure Act covers malpractice, for example, a criminal offence, breach of contract, negligence or causing danger to health and safety. Concerns relevant to this policy include, but are not limited to:

1. Clinical malpractice including the abuse of patients in care
2. System failures, for example untoward incident reporting
3. Concerns about health and safety including not complying with the Health and Safety Act
4. Financial irregularities, including fraud or suspected fraud
5. Breach of employee codes of conduct or rules, for example gifts and hospitality

### **How a concern can be raised?**

Employees can raise a concern with his or her line manager or with the Chief Executive or the Board of Croydon Mencap

If a concern is raised the line manager or Board members will:

- a) Take note of the key points of the concern and check if the matter has been raised with anyone else
- b) Check that the employee has a copy of the whistleblowing policy and explain the key principles, for examples the rights and responsibilities of someone expressing a concern under the Public Disclosures Act
- c) Assure the whistleblower about complete confidentiality unless at a later stage this becomes unavoidable, for example if legal proceedings take place

### **The investigating Officer will:**

I. Agree the arrangements and the timescale for investigating the matter. The timescale will be determined by the type of concern but will not normally take longer than eight weeks. If it needs to be longer than eight weeks, there will be a clear explanation of why this is the case

Or

II. Suggest a different way of handling the matter if this is appropriate, e.g if it falls within Adult Protection Policy

### **Where can independent advice be sought?**

If employees feel unsure about using this procedure, or would like independent advice at any stage, they may contact the independent charity - Protect (Whistleblowing Advice) Limited on 020 3117 2520.

Their lawyers provide free confidential advice at any stage about raising a concern.