

‘Freedom to Speak Up’ Whistleblowing Policy

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Publication Date:	August 2025
Review Date:	August 2026
Target Audience:	All Employees

Policy Statement

Lighthouse Collaborative Care is dedicated to fostering an open, safe, and supportive culture. We prioritise people by valuing our employees, colleagues, and their families. LCC is committed to acting with integrity, honesty, and respect and aims to cultivate a culture of safety that encourages colleagues to raise concerns and ensures a prompt and effective response to those concerns.

This policy is designed to provide a safe avenue for staff and stakeholders to raise concerns about wrongdoing that may impact the welfare of children or the integrity of our service, without fear of reprisal.

This policy has been implemented to comply with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the principles and recommended actions outlined in 'Freedom to Speak Up' (February 2015)ⁱ—the report compiled by Robert Francis QCⁱⁱ following his review into fostering an honest and transparent reporting culture within the NHS.

At Lighthouse Collaborative Care, we recognise that our work with vulnerable children and young people places our employees in a position of trust and authority. To retain the confidence of those we support, this responsibility must be exercised ethically, transparently, and with the utmost care.

We are committed to ensuring that our recruitment and management systems reflect this responsibility, and to cultivating a workplace culture where concerns especially those related to the safety or well-being of children are taken seriously and addressed with fairness and promptness.

All employees and carers have a duty to remain vigilant for any signs of illegal, unethical, or unsafe conduct and to report any such behaviour they become aware of, in accordance with this policy.

Ultimately, our success as a service depends on the dedication, professionalism, and skill of our people. Creating an environment where staff feel safe and empowered to raise concerns is both a legal obligation and a moral imperative.

Purpose

At Lighthouse Collaborative Care, we are committed to the highest standards of care and integrity. This policy provides a safe avenue for staff and stakeholders to raise concerns about wrongdoing that may affect the welfare of children or the integrity of the service, without fear of retaliation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, agency staff, contractors, and volunteers. Concerns might include, but are not limited to:

- Safeguarding risks or abuse of children
- Breaches of statutory regulations
- Unprofessional conduct or malpractice
- Fraud, corruption, or financial mismanagement
- Health and safety violations
- Attempts to conceal any such wrongdoing

What is whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is a key safeguard mechanism especially in settings like residential children's care, where trust, safety, and accountability are paramount. It allows individuals to raise the alarm about malpractice or neglect that might otherwise stay hidden, and it sends a powerful message that protecting vulnerable individuals is everyone's responsibility.

By encouraging transparency and creating pathways for people to speak up without fear, whistleblowing protects not just the children and young people in your care but also the integrity and values of your organisation.

What Does not Count as Whistleblowing?

It is important to note that personal grievances such as complaints about bullying, harassment, discrimination, or disputes relating to an individual's contract of employment do not usually qualify as whistleblowing under UK law, unless the concern is demonstrably in the public interest (for example, systemic discrimination across the organisation).

These matters should be dealt with through Lighthouse Collaborative Care's Grievance Procedure, which is specifically designed to address personal concerns and contractual issues.

If an employee believes:

- There has been a breach of their employment contract, or
- Their contract has been or is likely to be broken,

They should raise the matter formally using the internal grievance process rather than through the whistleblowing channels.

Raising a Concern

Concerns can be raised:

- Verbally or in writing to a line manager, safeguarding lead, or the Registered Manager
- Via a confidential email: [Insert dedicated contact email]
- Anonymously (although this might impact how thoroughly we can investigate)

If you feel unable to report internally, you can contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) or Ofsted directly.

Investigation and Response

Concerns will be taken seriously, handled discreetly, and investigated promptly by an impartial person. Where appropriate, we will keep the whistleblower informed about the progress and outcome of any inquiry.

Protection and Support

Staff raising concerns in good faith under this policy are protected from detriment or victimisation. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who retaliates against a whistleblower.

Confidentiality

Disclosures will be treated in confidence. Information will only be shared with those necessary to investigate and resolve the matter, or as required by law.

External Media Interest

From time to time, there may be external interest from the press or media regarding Lighthouse Collaborative Care Residential Children's Home or the wider children's care sector.

If an employee receives a phone call or is approached by a journalist, reporter, or other media representative, they must not answer any questions or provide any information. Instead, they should:

- Politely take a message and note down any relevant details (name, organisation, contact information, nature of the query).
- Respond only with: "No comment" if questioned.
- Immediately refer the enquiry to the Responsible Individual in the first instance or a Director in their absence

This protocol is in place to ensure any media engagement is managed appropriately and in a way that safeguards both the individuals we support and the integrity of our service.

Getting External Advice

Ideally, issues related to practice should be addressed well before they reach the whistleblowing stage. Adults caring for children can raise questions about any areas of concern during supervision so that practice can be amended before causing harm. Whistleblowing can be a challenging and uncomfortable experience. However, it must be faced to prevent problems from escalating. An adult who takes no action may find themselves caught up in poor practice. The responsibility for whistleblowing lies with any individual, regardless of their position, who has evidence or suspicions of substandard practice.

- Adults can contact the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's whistleblowing helpline by calling 0800 028 0285, or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Whistle Blowing Helpline for NHS and Social Care Staff^{iv} – 0800 7245 725
- They can also whistleblow directly to Ofsted by calling 0300 1233155, or by emailing whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk^v

Communication and Training

This policy will be made accessible to all new employees and covered during their induction. Ongoing training and updates will foster a culture where concerns are welcomed and addressed constructively.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; If in doubt, Speak Out!

ⁱ [The Report](#)

ⁱⁱ [Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up review - GOV.UK](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [NSPCC Helpline | NSPCC](#)

^{iv} [NHS whistleblowing helpline to be extended to social care staff - GOV.UK](#)

^v [Reporting concerns and whistleblowing about children's social care services - GOV.UK](#)