

Whistleblowing Policy

September 2019

1. Statement of intent

1. Audlem & District Community Action (ADCA) believes that its staff, trustees and volunteers are professional and skilful in their work. However, occasionally it may happen that a member of the organisation has concerns about a colleague's standards of practice. They may be worried that a vulnerable adult is not being cared for properly, is being abused or is at serious risk. It may be that they have concerns about fraud, financial irregularity or other issues. Everybody has a responsibility to raise such concerns so that they can be addressed and resolved.
2. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to maintain high standards of care to vulnerable adults. This policy aims to ensure that serious concerns are properly raised and addressed within ADCA, in consultation with Cheshire East Council where appropriate. This policy is, therefore, key to ensuring the continued delivery of best practice and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults.
3. ADCA acknowledges that 'raising concerns' can be an extremely difficult and courageous thing to do. Any person who has good grounds for their suspicions, even if they do not have proof, will be listened to and their concerns taken seriously.
4. This policy is intended to encourage and enable staff and volunteers to raise serious concerns within the organisation rather than overlooking a problem or seeking a resolution of the problem outside the organisation (unless this becomes necessary). Staff and volunteers can whistleblow without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage.

2. Procedure

1. In most circumstances, anyone wishing to raise concerns should discuss the matter with the Development Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator, who will take appropriate action in consultation with ADCA's Chairman or other designated Committee member and/or Cheshire East Council, as appropriate.
2. If this is not possible – for example, if it is an ADCA staff member who is thought not to have taken proper action or to be involved or colluding in some way – then the Chairman of ADCA or Cheshire East Council's Designated Officer for Adult Safeguarding (Tel. 0300 123 5010 in working hours or 0300 123 5022 out of hours) may be contacted. They will be responsible for ensuring the concerns are looked into or passed on to the most appropriate person.

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3. Depending on the nature of the concern, a response regarding the action taken on the matter should be supplied to the person raising it as soon as possible. It might not always be appropriate to reveal the full extent of the Investigation where this relates to personal issues involving a third party.
4. This Whistleblowing Policy may in some circumstances need to be read in conjunction with ADCA's Complaints Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure, or Safeguarding Policy (which includes procedures for responding to allegations against adults who work with children or vulnerable adults).

3. Failure to report and false accusations

1. A staff member or volunteer who does not report bad practice or abuse, neglect or ill-treatment of a vulnerable adult or anything illegal that they are aware of may be seen as colluding with unacceptable practice. Such collusion could result in the staff member facing disciplinary action or the volunteer being asked to leave the organisation and the information being forwarded to the appropriate persons.
2. False accusations later identified as malicious may also result in the accuser being asked to leave the organisation.