



## Whistleblowing Policy

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| Name of Policy       | Whistleblowing                |
| Author / Checked     | CFL                           |
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## 1. Introduction

Future Men (FM) is committed to working in an ethical and responsible manner, providing a high standard and quality of service to all who come into contact with the organisation. However, we recognise that we may fall short of these aims from time to time. In these circumstances you may feel that you need to raise your concerns through this whistleblowing policy. This Policy applies to all who work and volunteer with Future Men.

## 2. Aims

This policy has been created to ensure that:

- there is an effective process to follow to raise serious concerns
- you receive feedback on any action undertaken by us as a result of you raising serious concerns
- you will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for having raised your concern in good faith
- you are effectively signposted to further options available to you if you are dissatisfied with our response, or if internal investigation is not appropriate
- FM is able to take action against any employee who makes allegations in bad faith and/or publicly discloses information when it is unreasonable for them to do so.

## 3. Understanding Whistleblowing

In order to promote a culture of openness and to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their rights and responsibilities to whistleblowing, we will offer training to our team at least every two years, as the policy is reviewed and updated.

## 4. Definitions

**“Whistleblowing”** is a term used to refer to the disclosure of wrongdoing, malpractice, omissions and illegal acts at work. It can be referred to as “making a disclosure” or “blowing the whistle”. At Future Men this may relate to how we raise funds, how we spend funds, a breach of our health and safety obligations etc.

### Defining a ‘Qualifying Disclosure’

This term is given to a disclosure or report made by someone who genuinely and in good faith believes one of the incidents outlined below is happening, has happened or likely to happen in the future. A qualifying disclosure must be in the best interest of the public and relate to:

- a criminal offence (including fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, eg theft, fraud or malpractice)
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation, or
- concealment of any of the above.

## 5. Protections for Whistleblowers

It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. You do, however, need to hold a reasonable belief of such an action having been, being or likely to be carried out.

If you make such a protected disclosure, you have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised. This is the case even were it to materialise that you were genuinely mistaken. We will not tolerate any individual being subjected to a detriment as a result of their making a disclosure in good faith.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) grants protection to employees, as well as certain workers, contractors, trainees and agency staff. However, there are gaps in the law that mean other individuals do not have legal protection. They include, but are not limited to:

- Interns
- Volunteers
- Priests or ministers of religion
- Foster carers
- Members of the armed forces
- Self-employed workers

Section 43 of PIDA provides protection for individuals who raise legitimate concerns, as outlined in section 2.2. PIDA provides protection from detriment, dismissal or redundancy to people disclosing information. At Future Men we are committed to an environment that is open, honest and in which we hold people accountable to ensure that concerns can be freely raised. We will therefore, in so far as is possible, aim to treat all individuals making a disclosure in the spirit of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

## **6. What Whistleblowing is Not**

Whistleblowing does not include the following types of disclosure or report:

- personal grievances such as bullying, harassment or discrimination;
- safeguarding concerns;
- disciplinary or grievances.

There are occasions when a concern related to the above could be considered in the public's interest and therefore become a whistleblowing concern. However, in most circumstances you should review the relevant organisational policies and procedures.

## **7. Malicious Whistleblowing**

If it is proven through an investigation process that an allegation of wrongdoing has been made maliciously, then the person who made the allegations may face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and in some cases may be subject to criminal investigation where illegality has occurred.

Malicious allegations include but are not limited to:

- raising a matter which you know to be untrue;
- making an allegation without having reasonable grounds for believing it to be substantially true;
- improperly collecting the information to support the allegations;
- being involved in any way in the malpractice qualifying disclosure;
- making an allegation for personal or third-party gain.

When a malicious allegation has been made it is unlikely a person will have protection.

## **8. Raising a Concern Within Future Men**

If you have cause for concern, you should raise this as soon as possible. This will allow us to investigate the issue and take any remedial action. You do not need to provide evidence in order to raise a concern.

You may choose to make your disclosure verbally, however it is our strong preference that disclosures are made in writing. You should ensure that you provide the following when making your disclosure:

- Any relevant contextual information including dates, times, places, witnesses etc.
- Give a specific example of any wrongdoing of which you are aware

- State clearly the reason that the situation gives cause for concern

You must state clearly that you are raising your concern using the whistleblowing policy and whether you wish for your identity to be kept confidential.

## **9. Confidentiality of Disclosures**

FM will make every effort to deal with your case confidentially, depending on the circumstances of the case this may not always be possible. Where this is the case, you will be informed of this and the reasons why it was not possible.

## **10. Anonymous Disclosures**

FM will consider anonymous disclosures, but we do not encourage them as anonymity often makes it difficult to properly investigate concerns, protect employees or give feedback on outcomes.

Any anonymous disclosures will be accepted and treated as equally as those bearing a name. When receiving an anonymous report:

- a decision will be made about whether it is possible to pursue the report based on the information provided
- a complete and comprehensive investigation will be more challenging as there is no option to seek further information or clarification
- it will not be possible to share any outcome or actions from an investigation.

## **11. Who to Report to?**

- In the first instance you should always raise your concern with your line manager.
- Where this is not appropriate because they may be involved in the alleged malpractice, wrongdoing or illegal acts or omissions in some way, or if you are not satisfied with the outcome having raised the issue with your line manager, you should raise your concern with their manager or another more senior member of staff.
- Sometimes it may be inappropriate to raise your concern via either of the routes listed above. In this instance you should report directly to the CEO or the Chair of Trustees.
- If none of the routes listed above is viable you may wish to raise your concern externally (see separate section on external disclosures below).

## **12. Handling of Disclosures**

Once you have made a disclosure you will receive an acknowledgement of your disclosure within 3 working days.

An investigation will follow – in most cases the investigation will be led by the person receiving the initial disclosure. As a part of the investigation you will be invited to a meeting as soon as possible (away from the workplace if needed). During this meeting you will have the opportunity to talk through your concern.

Wherever possible we will keep your disclosure confidential if that is your wish, however this is not always a possibility, but we will let you know if this is not the case.

You will be told either at the meeting or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address the concern you have raised. Where action is not taken, you will be informed and given an explanation in writing. The action taken in response to a disclosure will depend on the nature of the concern.

Typically, the matters raised may result in one or more of the following:

- no action required

- action being taken under another FM policy or procedure
- an internal investigation under this policy
- a referral to the police or relevant statutory body
- a referral to FM's external auditors
- a referral to the Charity Commission
- an independent enquiry.

Any FM manager or senior officer receiving a potential whistleblowing concern must notify the Operations Manager immediately that a concern has been raised and inform them of progress in resolving the concern.

### **13. External Reporting**

We encourage all reports to be made internally in the first instance. Subsequently all avenues of escalation should be exhausted. However, in circumstances where that is not possible, or where having made a disclosure you are unhappy with the outcome, you have a legal right to make a disclosure to an external body. This is called a 'Public Disclosure'.

An external body may be non-regulatory; such as an MP, legal advisor or the police. Alternatively it may be regulated, in which case, the disclosure can be made to 'prescribed' persons should the malpractice fall within that body's regulatory remit.

These prescribed bodies include but are not limited to:

- Your Local Authority
- The Children's Commissioner
- The Charity Commission
- HM Revenue & Customs
- The Health and Safety Executive
- The Financial Services Authority
- The Office of Fair Trading
- The Environment Agency
- The Information Commissioner
- The Serious Fraud Office
- The Fundraising Regulator

The relevant regulatory or non-regulatory body will carry out investigations as necessary and in line with the procedures and processes outlined by them. A [full list of prescribed persons](#) and bodies can be found in the schedule to the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999 (SI 1999/1549).

The disclosure will be protected under legislation in the same way as a disclosure made internally as long as it meets the same conditions.

### **14. Disclosures to the Media**

Disclosures to the media will not be considered reasonable and may constitute misconduct. As such, the matter might be treated as a disciplinary matter in accordance with our disciplinary and grievance policy and procedure.

### **15. Further Help and Support**

For protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, employees need to be aware of the strict rules governing disclosures. If at any stage you feel unsure or would like to discuss it with someone independent, you can discuss your concern with someone at Protect.

Protect is an Independent Whistleblowing charity. They provide confidential advice to would-be whistleblowers who are concerned about making a disclosure. Their contact details are: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

Advice line: 020 7404 6609 and 020 3117 2550

Email: [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk)

## 16. Legislative Context

This policy has been created using the following guidance:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a819ef5e5274a2e87dbe9e3/bis-15-200-whistleblowing-guidance-for-employers-and-code-of-practice.pdf>

[Employment Rights Act \(ERA\) 1996](#)

[The Public Interests and Disclosure Act 1998](#)

[List of Prescribed People and Bodies](#)

## 17. Associated Future Men Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on:

Complaints

Grievance

Health and Safety

Safeguarding

Bullying and Harassment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Disciplinary and Grievance

These can be found on our [website](#)

## 18. The Seven Characteristics of Positive Masculinity

|                                                                                     |                 |                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|
|  | Resilience      | Able to recover when things go wrong    |
|  | Inclusiveness   | Open to include all different people    |
|  | Reflectiveness  | Learning from things that happen to you |
|  | Empathy         | Caring for others                       |
|  | Resourcefulness | Able to make the best of what you have  |
|  | Curiosity       | Interested in the world around you      |

|                                                                                   |              |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|
|  | Non-violence | Can solve problems without hurting others |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|