

8.6 POLICY WHISTLEBLOWER

Purpose

To outline the processes for people (service users, carers, family, employees, contractors or volunteers) to report alleged improper or corrupt conduct in relation to any aspect of Better Together's services, without fear of reprisal.

Scope of Policy

This policy relates to all Better Together services, employees, service users, carers, family, visitors, volunteers, agency workers and members of the public.

Policy Statement

Better Together is committed to

- safeguarding the safety, health and wellbeing of service users at all times
- conducting its services in a professional, ethical and accountable manner
- ensuring individuals employed by Better Together behave professionally, ethically and consistent with Better Together's Code of Conduct which forms part of their employment contract
- supporting and encouraging any reporting of alleged improper or corrupt conduct
- making it clear what types of concerns/issues should be raised
- making it clear who can raise issues and concerns (any person, either anonymously or self-identifying)
- making it clear how reports can be made to Whistleblower Protection Officers whose contact details are publicly available
- promoting external avenues for complaints where Whistleblowers would prefer not to report directly to Better Together
- maintaining the confidentiality and security of reports within the law
- respecting Whistleblowers (including their identify) and protecting them from reprisals, discrimination, harassment or victimisation as a consequence of their having made a report
- immediately reviewing any such allegations and take action to investigate internally consistent with the Better Together Investigation Guidelines, or alternatively reporting to external authorities as necessary.
- making sure that Whistleblowers receive feedback
- taking action to resolve and rectify any wrongdoing as far as is reasonable and practicable.

Disclosures about personal work-related grievances are **not** generally protected by the laws. This includes disclosures about:

- matters pertaining to a discloser's employment that impact upon the employee personally;
- interpersonal conflict between a discloser and another employee;
- decisions relating to promotions, demotions, terms and conditions of employment; and
- decisions about taking disciplinary action against a discloser (including decisions about suspension and termination of employment)

Definitions

Any defined terms below are specific to this document:

Allegations - Information that suggests improper or corrupt conduct by Better Together or member(s) of management or staff

Improper conduct - Improper conduct means conduct that is:

- illegal;
- a substantial mismanagement of Better Together resources;
- conduct involving a substantial risk to service users/residents, public health and safety and the environment;
- conduct by an employee, former employee of Better Together that amounts to the misuse of information or material acquired in the course of the performance of their official functions, or
- deliberate concealment of the above

Examples of improper conduct are:

- A senior manager using confidential service user information, Better Together intellectual property or Better Together resources to market or further their own business
- A senior manager misappropriating Better Together monies

Corrupt conduct - Corrupt conduct means:

- conduct of any person (whether or not an employee) that adversely affects the honest performance of an employee's role or responsibilities or Better Together's functions; and/or
- the performance of an employee's functions dishonestly or with inappropriate partiality or conflict of interest; a conspiracy or attempt to engage in the above conduct.

Examples of corrupt conduct are:

- A senior manager destroying or amending Better Together records for self-protection

- A senior manager threatening or pressuring other employees to conceal or destroy incriminating information or evidence

The conduct must be serious enough to constitute, if proved, a criminal offence or reasonable grounds for dismissal.

Whistleblower - A person who makes an allegation of improper conduct or corrupt conduct under the Whistleblower Policy to a Whistleblower Protection Officer.

Whistleblower Protection Officers - Whistleblower Protection Officers are senior Better Together managers with designated responsibility for receipt and acknowledgement of allegations made under this Whistleblower Policy.

They are responsible for ongoing communication with and feedback to the Whistleblower, if the Whistleblower wishes for this. They are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing health and wellbeing and provision of support to Whistleblowers.

In relation to the allegations reported to them, they are responsible for ensuring documentation, appropriate investigation, action on investigation outcomes, identification of systemic issues contributing to opportunity for wrongdoing and implementation of action plans to redress, and reporting via the management committee, both Better Together Manager and Committee President are designated Whistleblower protection officers.