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POLICY:

Whistleblower Protection Policy

Implemented:

Date of last review:

Date of next review:

December 2024

This Policy applies to all activity undertaken by Heart for Chorley in pursuing its purpose as a Registered Charity serving its beneficiaries, partners and the community.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any person is free to raise concerns, suspicion or knowledge of any wrongdoing without suffering retaliation and the reports, if they occur, are handled in the most appropriate and legally compliant manner for the safety, security and benefit of all stakeholders.

Introduction:

Heart for Chorley (the "Charity") is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency. In line with The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and Employment Protection Act 1975 and the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Charity recognises the importance of whistleblowing in uncovering and addressing wrongdoing. This Whistleblower Protection Policy aims to encourage employees, volunteers, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders to disclose any concerns of wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

Scope:

This policy applies to all individuals associated with Heart for Chorley, including but not limited to employees, volunteers, contractors, and beneficiaries.

Protected Disclosures:

Protected disclosures include, but are not limited to, concerns about:

- a) Financial misconduct or fraud.
- b) Violation of laws, regulations, or legal obligations.
- c) Unethical conduct or behaviour.
- d) Health and safety risks.
- e) Discrimination or harassment.
- f) Mismanagement of funds or resources.

Reporting Mechanisms:

Individuals may report concerns of wrongdoing through the following channels:

- a) Internal Reporting: Share concerns with a supervisor, manager, or designated person within the Charity including Trustees.
- b) External Reporting: If internal channels are not appropriate or effective, individuals may report concerns externally to relevant regulatory bodies or authorities such as:
 - i. Green Pastures (Heart for Chorley partners).
 - ii. Chorley Borough Council
 - iii. Charity Commission

Protection for Whistleblowers:

Heart for Chorley is committed to protecting whistleblowers from any form of retaliation. Retaliation is strictly prohibited, and the Charity will take appropriate measures to safeguard individuals who

make disclosures. Whistleblowers may not be subjected to adverse employment actions, eviction, or loss of service provision based on their disclosure.

Confidentiality:

The Charity will treat all whistleblower disclosures with the utmost confidentiality, to the extent allowed by law. Information will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis, and every effort will be made to protect the identity of the whistleblower. (See Data Protection and Confidentiality policy).

Investigation Process:

All disclosures will be promptly and thoroughly investigated by an impartial party. The Charity will take appropriate corrective action if wrongdoing is substantiated. A disclosure may invoke the Disciplinary policy or the Admissions and Departures policy.

Non-Disclosure Agreements:

Any confidentiality agreements or clauses that attempt to prevent or limit an individual's right to make a protected disclosure are void and unenforceable.

Awareness and Training:

Heart for Chorley will provide ongoing training and awareness programmes to ensure that all individuals are aware of their rights and responsibilities under this policy.

Review of Policy:

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant legislation.

Contact Information:

For reporting concerns or seeking guidance on whistleblower protections, individuals can contact john@heartforchorley.org if the disclosure is regarding beneficiaries, sean@heartforchorley.org if it is regarding staff or volunteers and chair@heartforchorley.org for all other situations.

By adhering to this Whistleblower Protection Policy, Heart for Chorley is dedicated to fostering a culture of openness, accountability, and ethical behaviour. Every individual associated with the Charity is encouraged to contribute to the continuous improvement of its operations by reporting any concerns of wrongdoing.