



HEARTSTART

Saving Lives Together

HEARTSTART WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (2022)

This policy should be used by any employed staff and volunteers of Heartstart Schemes to raise a qualifying disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This policy is available to all employees, volunteers and ex-employees and ex-volunteers who have concerns about misconduct or wrongdoing.

Usually concerns can be easily resolved. However, when the concern feels serious because it is about a possible danger, professional misconduct or financial malpractice that might affect colleagues or service users of the Heartstart course, it can be difficult to know what to do.

Staff and volunteers may be worried about raising such an issue and may think it best to keep it to themselves, perhaps feeling it is none of their business or that it is only a suspicion. Staff or Volunteers may also feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues. It may also be the case that a colleague has said something but found that they have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

Heartstart, supported by the Resuscitation Research Group (University of Edinburgh), is committed to running the Heartstart schemes in the best way possible. This policy has been introduced to reassure all staff and volunteers that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and to enable them to raise any concern which they may have at an early stage and in the right way. Rather than wait for proof, it is preferable if a matter is raised when it is still a concern.

This policy applies to all those who work for a Heartstart Scheme: whether full-time or part-time or in a voluntary capacity. Where people are employed by an organisation to deliver Heartstart courses they should also refer to their local organisational policy. The University of Edinburgh Whistleblowing policy applies to employees and any other member of staff of the University and its subsidiary companies (Heartstart), including any temporary or agency staff or unpaid members of staff and voluntary workers. its policy can be downloaded from: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/finance/for-staff/financial-regulations-policies-and-procedures/policies-and-procedures>

If a member of staff or volunteer feels that something is of concern and they feel that it is something which they think Heartstart supported by Save a Life for Scotland (RRG Edinburgh) should know about or look into, they should use this procedure.

Definition of what constitutes whistleblowing

Whistleblowing concerns generally relate to a risk, malpractice or wrongdoing that affects others and may be something which adversely affects our service users, the public, members of staff, volunteers or the organisation itself. A grievance differs from a whistleblowing concern as it is a personal complaint regarding an individual's own employment situation. A whistleblowing concern is where an individual raises information as a witness whereas a grievance is where the individual is a complainant.

A broad definition of what constitutes Whistleblowing would be:

- a criminal offence
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of Code of Conduct
- concealment of any of the above

Examples of these would include (although this list is not exhaustive):

Malpractice or ill treatment of a colleague or service user

- A criminal offence is believed to have been committed, is being committed or is likely to have been committed
- Suspected fraud
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety regulations.
- Breach of standing financial instructions
- A breach of a code of conduct
- Information on any of the above has been, or is being, or is likely to be concealed.

Your safety

If a member of staff/volunteer raises a genuine concern under this policy, they will not be at risk of losing their position or suffering any detriment (such as a reprisal or victimisation). Provided the staff member / volunteer acts in good faith, it does not matter if they are mistaken or if there is an innocent explanation for their concerns. A member of staff / volunteer raising a concern will not be asked to prove their claim. However, this assurance will not be extended to a member of staff / volunteer who maliciously raises a matter they know to be untrue.

The confidence of staff and volunteers

Within these assurances, Heartstart hopes that staff and volunteers will raise concerns openly. However, it is recognised that there may be circumstances when staff and volunteers would prefer to speak to someone in confidence first. If this is the case, the member of staff or volunteer raising the concern should say so at the outset. If it is asked not to disclose someone's identity, this will be honoured unless required by law. Staff and volunteers should however understand that there may be times when Heartstart will be unable to resolve a concern without revealing someone's identity, for example where personal evidence is essential. In such cases, it will be discussed with the member of staff or volunteer whether and how the matter can best proceed.

It should be remembered that if staff or volunteers do not disclose their identity, it will be much more difficult for Heartstart to look into the matter. It will also not be possible to protect the staff member or volunteer's position or give them feedback. Accordingly, a member of staff or volunteer raising a concern should not assume that Heartstart can provide the same assurances where a concern is reported anonymously.

Raising a concern

If a member of staff or volunteer is unsure about raising a concern, they can get independent advice. Contact details are listed in section 10. Staff and volunteers should also remember that they do not need to have firm evidence before raising a concern, however, they should explain as fully as possible the information or circumstances that gave rise to the concern.

How to raise a concern

1. If a member of staff or volunteer has a concern about a risk, malpractice or wrongdoing, it is hoped that they will feel able to raise it first with their local Heartstart scheme Coordinator, Chairman or Medical Director. This may be done verbally or in writing to:

2. If a member of staff or volunteer feels unable to raise the matter with their local Heartstart scheme coordinator, Chairman or Medical Director, for whatever reason, they should raise the matter with:

Lisa MacInnes, Director, Save A Life For Scotland, Resuscitation Research Group,
University of Edinburgh, Queen's Medical Research Institute, Room E2.55, 47 Little
France Crescent, Edinburgh
EH16 4TJ.
Email: lisa@savealife.scot

3. If these channels have been followed and the member of staff or volunteer still has concerns or if they feel that the matter is so serious that they cannot discuss it with the above named persons, please contact:

Lynne Ramsay
University of Edinburgh Whistleblowing contact
Finance.Helpline@ed.ac.uk

OR

Your local contact:

How Heartstart will handle the matter

Once a concern has been raised, it will be assessed and consideration will be given as to what action may be appropriate. This may involve an informal review, an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. The member of staff or volunteer raising the concern will be advised who will be handling the matter, how they can contact them and what further assistance may be needed. The Heartstart Scheme will write to the member of staff or volunteer summarising the concern and advising how they propose to handle it and providing a timeframe for feedback. If the concern has been misunderstood or there is any information missing, the member of staff or volunteer should highlight this.

When raising a concern, it will be helpful to know how the member of staff or volunteer thinks the matter might best be resolved. If the member of staff or volunteer has any personal interest in the matter, they should confirm this at the outset.

The member of staff or volunteer will receive feedback on the outcome of any investigation. However, it should be noted that it may not be possible to give details of the precise action taken, where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed to the other person. While it cannot be guaranteed that all matters will be responded to in the way that the member of staff or volunteer might wish, Heartstart will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly.

If at any time throughout the investigation it becomes evident that formal disciplinary action may be a possible outcome, the investigation will be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the disciplinary procedure.

Monitoring oversight

The Resuscitation Research Group (Edinburgh) is responsible for this policy and will review it regularly. The operation of this policy will be monitored by the Director of Save a Life for Scotland. If any member of staff or volunteer have any comments or questions, these should be brought to the attention of the Local Heartstart Scheme co-ordinator in the first instance.

Review

This policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years or sooner in light of any legislative changes and in line with any national changes.

Bodies where you can get Independent advice

BSI Code of Practice on Whistleblowing Arrangements. You can download a free copy of the 2008 British Standards Institution's Code of Practice on Whistleblowing Arrangements from www.pcaw.co.uk/bsi

Public Concern at Work. For information about the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 please visit: www.pcaw.co.uk/law/uklegislation/htm

Reporting and recording concerns raised

Although the number of staff or volunteer concerns that will be raised under the Whistleblowing Policy may be small, it is essential that we have a clear and central route for recording and reporting these concerns and a robust approach to ensuring that concerns are taken seriously, are appropriately investigated and recommendations or learning fully implemented.

Any individual within this policy to whom a staff or volunteer concern is raised whether verbally or in writing under the Whistleblowing Policy should:

- Acknowledge the raised concern in writing within three days of receiving it; if the concern is not raised anonymously.
- Seek to understand and clarify the concern and determine how the concern is best actioned, which may involve meeting with the individual.
- Confirm with the individual who raised the concern (assuming it hasn't been raised anonymously) whether or not the matter is being raised in confidence.
- Record the initial details of the concern using the reporting form. (Appendix 1)
- Complete the process to investigate the concerns raised, providing feedback to the staff member or volunteer who raised the concern, if appropriate.(Appendix 2)
- Complete the Monitoring Form. The Coordinator shall hold Monitoring information [no persons identified] (Appendix 3).

Appendix 1

Staff/Volunteer concern raised under Heartstart Whistleblowing Policy

Full name of person receiving the concern

Position of the person receiving the concern

Concern level: (tick)

- Heartstart Co-ordinator, Chairman or Medical Director
- Director of Save a Life for Scotland
- Service Level Agreement Manager, University of Edinburgh Whistleblowing officer

Full name of person raising the concern

Position of the person raising the concern

- Raised confidentially
- Raised anonymously

Details of concern:

Date raised

How was the concern raised?

- Verbally
- In writing by email
- In writing by mail

Concern category:

- Criminal offence
- Health & Safety risk
- Breach of Code of Conduct
- Other: *Please specify below*

Description of concern:

- **Concern acknowledged in writing** (*tick to confirm*)

Date

Appendix 2

Staff/Volunteer concern raised under Heartstart Whistleblowing Policy

Investigation outcome form

Full name of person receiving the concern

Position of the person receiving the concern

Full name of person raising the concern (if known)

Position of the person raising the concern (if known)

Date concluded

Brief outcome details, including any recommendations/organisational learning:

Staff member/volunteer provided with feedback on the outcome?

- Yes
- No (*please specify reason below*)

Concern resolved to staff/volunteer's satisfaction?

- Yes
- No

Additional comments

Appendix 3

Heartstart Whistleblowing Policy monitoring form - to be completed for all complaints

Heartstart Whistleblowing Policy 2022 - reproduced and edited with kind permission from Heartstart Ayrshire and Arran. Version 1.0

Date

Transparency

- Name identified
- Name withheld
- Anonymous

How was the concern raised?

- Telephone
- Email
- Post

Concern category:

- Criminal offence
 - Health & Safety risk
 - Breach of Code of Conduct
 - Other (*please specify*)
-

Description of concern:

Outcome, including any recommendations/organisational learning:

