

PITSTONE YOUTH CAFÉ

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY & PROCEDURE

POLICY STATEMENT

Pitstone Youth Cafe are committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and so encourage all staff and volunteers not to overlook concerns they may have but to raise those concerns using the following procedure.

ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES:

All volunteers and staff with Pitstone Youth Cafe have a responsibility within this procedure.

PITSTONE YOUTH CAFE committee members will :

- a. Ensure the Whistle blowing procedures are followed correctly, seeking external advice where they are unsure.
- b. Support those who raise concerns under this procedure to ensure that they do not suffer detriment as a result of their action
- c. Protect their identity and source, only as far as is possible

Staff of Pitstone Youth Cafe and Volunteers will:

- a. Act in good faith and not blow the whistle for personal gain or with malicious intent but use this procedure to raise concerns in the public interest.
- b. Reasonably believe their allegations and the information they provide are substantially true.

PRINCIPLES

The policy and procedure contained within this document is founded on the following principles:

- a. That employees/workers have a legal right and duty to report their concerns if they have a reasonable belief that wrongdoing may be occurring, or may have occurred, within the Group.
- b. That the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees/workers from reprisal, victimisation or harassment at work if they raise a concern in good faith.
- c. To encourage employees/workers to raise serious concerns within the Group initially, rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside.
- d. To encourage and enable individuals to raise concerns about any aspect of the Group's work and receive feedback on any action taken without fear of reprisal.
- e. To ensure that individuals receive a timely response to their concerns.
- f. Not to discriminate against any individual in the application of this policy and procedure on any grounds including, grounds of gender, transgender, race, trade union activities, disability, age, sexual orientation, trans-gender status, part-time work status, religion or belief or any other personal characteristic or quality.

DEFINITION OF WHISTLE BLOWING

- Whistle blowing occurs when an officer or volunteer raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity that they are aware of through their activities and that may affect others, e.g. users, members of the public. A concern raised, also known as a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, does not need to be in the public interest to qualify for protection.
- The Whistleblower may not be directly or personally affected by the danger or illegality. Consequently, the whistleblower rarely has a personal interest in the outcome of the investigation and as such should not be expected to prove their case. Instead, he or she may raise the concern, also known as a protected disclosure, using the process outlined in this policy, so that others can address it.
- Concerns that are covered by this policy include:
 - Conduct which is an offence or breach of law
 - Failing to comply with a legal obligation
 - Health and Safety risks, including risks to the public as well as employees/workers

- Damage to the environment
- Abuse of clients
- Safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people or vulnerable adults
- Practice which falls below established standards of practice
- Possible fraud, corruption or financial irregularity.
- Any other unethical conduct
- Covering up information about anything listed above

RAISING A CONCERN

In the first instance, the volunteer worker should raise their concern orally or in writing with the Café Manager, or, if the concern involves the Café Manager, the clerk to the Parish Council.

The person raising the concern must make it clear that they are raising the concern under the Whistleblowing policy.

If they wish to remain anonymous, they should make this clear to the person they contact.

Employees/volunteer workers will not be required to provide evidence of the concern but will be expected to demonstrate that there are reasonable grounds for raising the issue.

PROCEDURE FOR CONSIDERING THE CONCERN

On receipt of the concern, the Café Manager will make an initial investigation and then bring the matter to the Parish Council for action. The outcome will be advised to the person originating the concern.

RAISING THE CONCERN EXTERNALLY

If the employee / voluntary worker is not satisfied with the reported outcome they are entitled to take their concern to any of the following :

- A County Councillor or the local Member of Parliament
- The Police
- A relevant professional body or inspectorate (e.g. OFSTED OR SSI)

This policy was adopted at the Pitstone Parish Council meeting on:

..... (Date and Minute Reference)

On behalf of the Pitstone Youth Cafe:

..... (Signed)