Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Information

Responsible Person	**Wayne Stewart**
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Introduction:

New Roots Workshop CIC (NRW) is committed to the highest possible standard of operation, probity, and accountability, and recognises that its staff are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong within NRW. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the NRW team, and they may also fear harassment or victimisation.

This policy will also be considered as applying to referring organisations and individuals outside of NRW that work with Young People (YP), where NRW staff have concerns that warrant open discussion with NRW at Managing Director (MD) level, prior to such concerns prior to being shared to the authorities externally.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects staff who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with that Act and its commitment to the highest standards of service delivery, NRW encourages its staff with serious concerns about any aspect of NRW work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence, within NRW rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside. NRW will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of staff who raise concerns.

Whistleblowing is the term used when a member of staff raises a concern. A concern covered by this policy includes:

- Causing a risk/danger to Young People (YP).
- Damage to staff, the public, the environment or NRW's own reputation.

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- Endangering an individual's health and safety.
- A criminal offence.
- Unlawful conduct.
- Financial malpractice/fraud.
- Harm or risk of harm to YP.
- Contravening NRW policies or Code of Conduct.
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above.

When someone blows the whistle, it is to raise a concern about a danger or illegality that affects others. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 provides protection for staff who disclose information which might otherwise be regarded as confidential. This code applies to all staff within NRW. It is also applicable to:

- Contractors working for NRW on our training facility or externally whilst off site.
- Suppliers and those providing services under a contract with NRW in their own premises.

This policy aims to:
- Raise awareness that expressing concerns about unacceptable practice is the responsibility of all staff.
- Provide avenues for staff to raise concerns internally as a matter of course and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Provide for matters to be dealt with quickly and appropriately; and ensure that concerns are taken seriously.
- Reassure staff that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle- blowing in good faith.
- Allow staff to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the response.
- Describe how any staff can raise any concerns s/he may have about working practices and who should be informed about the concerns.

This policy is a key part of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and should be considered in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and other relevant safeguarding policies. This policy applies to all staff including contractors, consultants whilst engaged on NRW business.

Concerns that should be raised via this NRW Whistleblowing Policy may be in relation to the actions/behaviors that are perceived as:

- Unlawful.
- In breach of NRW procedures or regulations.
- Fall below established standards or practice.
- Amounting to improper conduct.

For example, (this list is not exhaustive):

- Malpractice or ill treatment of a YP.
- Abuse or neglect of YP, for example, failure to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being or by using abusive language, shouting or deliberately withholding food, drink or medication.
- Grooming a YP (to promote an unacceptable relationship).
- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed.
- Suspected fraud or corruption.
- A failure to comply with legislation or carry out a legal obligation.
- Endangering an individual's health and safety.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to report your concerns to an external body, for example, a responsible body, legal advisor or a prescribed person. It will rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media.

It is important not to delay passing any concerns up the chain of command.

Confidentiality

NRW will do its best to protect a member of staff's identity if confidentiality is requested. However, it must be understood that should the concern raised need to be addressed through another procedure, e.g. disciplinary procedures, the staff member may be asked to provide a signed statement as part of the evidence, thus revealing identity.

Failure to provide such a statement may mean that further action cannot be taken by NRW to address the concern and in some circumstances,

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NRW may have to disclose the identity of the staff member without their consent, although this will be discussed with the staff members first. NRW will support any staff member raising concerns in good faith.

Anonymous Allegations

This policy encourages staff members who raise concerns not to remain anonymous as, by doing so, allegations are difficult to investigate. NRW will exercise its discretion in deciding whether to investigate an anonymous allegation and will consider the seriousness of the issues raised and the likelihood of being able to confirm the allegation from attributable sources.

How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be raised immediately before something more serious happens. If you are aware that a YP has been abused or is at risk of abuse, you must report it. Failure to report abuse is a dereliction of your duty and could ultimately leave NRW open to non-compliance of our legal duty to refer appropriate matters to the Local Authority and/or the Independent Safeguarding Authority. NRW will ensure that any matter raised will be dealt with promptly, and wherever possible, confidentially, and will be thoroughly investigated by the NRW MD. Staff are potentially acting as a witness, not as a complainant.

If an investigation is appropriate, it will be completed by the NRW MD. If the staff member feels more comfortable speaking to a particular person, please mention this when you make contact with us.

You may raise your concern in the following ways:

- Verbally, in the first instance
- Written, as a secondary means of highlighting the concern.

The earlier you express the concern, the easier it is to take action. You should provide:

- Details of your concerns, including the nature, dates and location of any relevant incidents; and
- Reasons why you feel concerned about the situation.

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Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the NRW MD that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.

The details below are of key NRW members that your complaint should be directed to for raising a concern:

Name	Role	E mail	Contact No
Mr Wayne Stewart	Managing Director (MD)	Newrootsworkshop@gmail.co.uk	07852 322159
Mr Alan Tozer	Director	al.tozer@outlook.com	07914 308313
Mr Colin Robertson	Director	contact@newroootsworkshop.co.uk	07312 244912

If a reported concern is in relation to suspected fraud, corruption, or irregularity, the NRW MD must be informed immediately.

If you are concerned about a YP protection or safeguarding issue, you may use the contacts above who will ensure that your concern is passed to the MD NRW.

How NRW Will Respond:

All concerns raised will be treated confidentially by those involved in the reporting process, whilst acting in accordance with the Confidentiality provision outlined above. Action will be taken by NRW and will be dependent on the nature of the concern raised and may:

- Be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
- Be referred to the Police
- Be referred to the LADO
- Form the subject of an independent inquiry

Staff will receive an initial response to any concerns raised within 7 working days. Due to the nature of the concerns covered by this procedure it may not be possible for NRW to indicate how it proposes to deal with the matters and the timescales involved.

However, we undertake to inform staff who wish to know of the progress and outcome where this will not compromise the process. The aim is to reassure staff that the matter has been properly addressed. The amount of contact between the individual raising the concern and the person(s) investigating the matter will be dependent upon the issue raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided.

How Will You Be Protected?

NRW recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for malpractice. NRW will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect staff when they raise a concern in good faith. NRW will treat any harassment or victimisation as a serious disciplinary offence to be dealt with.

If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform NRW MD immediately.

Untrue & Unfounded Allegations:

If you raise a concern in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If you knowingly make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

Following investigation, allegations may be confirmed as unfounded. This outcome will be notified to the staff member who raised the concern, who will be informed that NRW deems the matter to be concluded and that it should not be raised again unless new evidence becomes available.

Raising Your Concern Outside of NRW:

This policy runs hand in hand with NEW ROOTS Code of Conduct Policy.docx to ensure staff, facilitators and contractors carry out their duties diligently and within safe measures. Both policies are intended

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to provide all with an avenue to raise concerns within NRW. The aim is to support all staff to follow the internal whistleblowing policy first, but if this is not possible, and you feel that it is right to take the matter outside of NRW, a list of prescribed people and bodies can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed- people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies#education

Employees who do take a concern outside of NRW should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information. You should make sure that you choose the correct person or body for your specific issue where applicable. We strongly encourage that you seek advice within NRW before reporting a concern externally to ensure that you are aware of any additional requirements that could potentially apply.

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