

## **Whistleblowing policy (confidential reporting)**

### **1. What is Whistleblowing?**

In this policy 'Whistleblowing' means the reporting by Employees, Volunteers, Members and/or Carers and Trustees of The Heather Club, suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act appropriately within The Heather Club

The aim of this Policy is to encourage Employees' Volunteers Trustees and Carers who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Heather Club's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

Employees or Volunteers are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within an organisation. 'Whistleblowing' is viewed by the Heather Club as a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to the club's efficiency and long-term success. It is not disloyal to colleagues or the Club to speak up. The Heather Club is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in all of its practices. To help achieve these standards it encourages freedom of speech.

If you are considering raising a concern you should read this Policy first. It explains:

- the type of issues that can be raised.
- how the person raising a concern will be protected from victimisation and harassment
- how to raise a concern, and
- what the Heather Club will do.

### **2. What is the aim of the Policy and when does it apply?**

#### **2.1. Aims of the Policy**

The Policy is designed to ensure that you can raise your concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the Heather Club without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.

It is also intended to encourage and enable you to raise serious concerns **within** the Heather Club rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

This Policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns at the earliest opportunity and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken.
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have made any disclosure in good faith.

## **2.2. Scope of this Policy**

**This Policy is intended to enable those who become aware of wrongdoing in the Heather Club affecting some other person or service, to report their concerns at the earliest opportunity so that they can be properly investigated.**

- If your concern relates to your own treatment as an employee Trustee or Volunteer, you should raise it with the Club Manager, Chair of Trustees, the Trustee allocated to Trustee support or the Trustee allocated to Volunteer support. Or you may wish to speak to a person that you know and trust, as long as you are confident that they will escalate your concern.
- If a Member or Carer has a concern about services provided to him/her, it should be raised as a complaint to the Heather Club Manager in the first instance

## **2.3. Who can raise a concern under this Policy?**

The Policy applies to all:

- Employees, Volunteers and Trustees of The Heather Club
- Member of the Heather Club
- Carers of Heather Club Members
- External stakeholders who have a relationship with The Heather Club

## **2.4. What should be reported?**

Any serious concerns that you have about service provision or the conduct of employees, volunteers or Trustees that:

- make you feel uncomfortable in terms of accepted standards.
- are not in keeping with the Heather Club's policies;
- fall below established standards of practice; or
- are improper behaviour.

## **3. Protecting the Whistleblower**

### **3.1. Your legal rights**

This policy has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects those making disclosures about certain matters of concern, when those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions and in the public interest.

The Act makes it unlawful for the Heather Club to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimised on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the Act.

Rarely, a case might arise where it is the Employee/Volunteer/Trustee that has participated in the action causing concern. In such a case it is in the Employee/Volunteer/Trustee's interest to come into the open as soon as possible.

### **3.2. Harassment or Victimisation**

The Heather Club is committed to good practice and high standards and to being supportive of you as an Employee/Volunteer/Trustee/Member or Carer.

The Heather Club recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If you honestly and reasonably believe what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer, your colleagues and those for whom you are providing a service.

The Heather Club will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith and will treat this as a serious issue.

### **3.3. Support to you**

Throughout this process:

- you will be given full support from the Heather Club Management
- your concerns will be taken seriously, and
- the Heather Club Management team will do all it can to help you.

For those who are not Heather Club Employee/Volunteer/Trustee's we will endeavour to provide appropriate advice and support wherever possible.

### **3.4. Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if that is your wish.

### **3.5. Anonymous Allegations**

This Policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible. If you do not tell us who you are it will be much more difficult for us to protect your position or to give you feedback. This policy is not ideally suited to concerns raised anonymously.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Heather Club. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised
- the credibility of the concern, and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources

### 3.6. Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith and reasonably believing it to be true, but it is not confirmed, the Heather Club will recognise your concern, and you have nothing to fear. If however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action will be taken

## 4. Raising a Concern

### 4.1. Who should you raise your concern with?

This will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the wrongdoing. You should normally raise concerns with the Heather Club Manager in the first instance, however, you can also contact The Chair of Trustees, Trustee responsible for Trustee welfare, and the Trustee responsible for assisting in Volunteer welfare.

Kim Adams	Heather Club Manager	07836560684 theheatherclub@outlook.com
Michael Rowan	Chair of Trustees	07956926094 michael.rowan@ntlworld.com
Rev Colin Cartwright	Responsible for Trustee welfare	07421885526 colin4fairtrade@gmail.com
Gill Tate	Trustee assisting with staff and volunteer welfare	07947021985 gilltateuk@gmail.com