



# WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

## Whistleblowing Policy

Approved by Chapter 3 October 2024

### 1. About this policy

- 1.1 We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff and volunteers to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.
- 1.2 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.
- 1.4 This policy is published within the Employee Handbook. A shorter version of this policy is included in the Volunteer Handbook.

### 2. What is whistleblowing?

- 2.1 Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations. It also includes the following matters specific to this workplace: the reporting of historic sexual abuse regarding a current staff member.
- 2.2 Whistleblowing is not the raising of a complaint that is an expression of your dissatisfaction, if you want to make a complaint about the cathedral, the complaints policy should be followed. It is also not for raising a complaint against a member of staff or volunteer for which the grievance policy should be followed or for raising concerns about other organisations, these should be raised through that organisation following their whistleblowing procedures.
- 2.3 The guardian of this policy is the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee who is independent of Chapter. If you have any difficulties with complying with this policy, please contact him/her. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

### 3. How to raise a concern

- 3.1 You should raise your concerns as soon as possible, this will make it easier to act and to enable any problems to be resolved or reported quickly.

3.2 You can make your disclosure either verbally or in writing. In your disclosure, you should include:

- a) any relevant context and background, including relevant dates, venues, names etc
- b) clearly state the reason why the situation causes for concern
- c) state that you are raising your concern using the whistleblowing policy and whether you wish to keep your identity confidential.

3.3 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your manager. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact the Chief Operating Officer who is designated to handle whistleblowing concerns in the cathedral and is the cathedral's Whistleblowing Officer. If the matter concerns the Whistleblowing Officer, it should be raised with the Dean, the senior non-executive member of Chapter or chair of the Audit and Risk Committee as you feel most comfortable. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

3.4 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

#### **4. How concerns will be handled**

4.1 Depending on the nature of the concern, it may be investigated by the Whistleblowing Officer, through the disciplinary process or it may be referred externally to the police, Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor, a regulator, other agencies, an external auditor or an independent investigator. Wherever possible, you will be given feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation.

4.2 Typically, the matters raised may result in one or more of the following:

- a) no action required
- b) action being taken under another policy or procedure
- c) an internal investigation under this policy
- d) a referral to the police or other relevant statutory body
- e) referral to the Church Commissioners
- f) a referral to cathedral's external auditors
- g) a Serious Incident Report being made to the Charity Commission
- h) an independent enquiry

## 5. Confidentiality

5.1 We encourage all staff and volunteers will to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern. You will be informed where this is the case.

## 6. External disclosures

6.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

6.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. "Protect" operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## 7. Protection and support for whistleblowers

7.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

7.2 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform either the Whistleblowing Officer, the Dean, the senior non-executive member of Chapter or Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

7.3 You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

7.4 However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

## 8. Contacts

<b>Whistleblowing Officer</b>	Alison Evans alison.evans@winchester-cathedral.org.uk
<b>The Dean</b>	The Very Revd Catherine Ogle dean@winchester-cathedral.org.uk
<b>Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter</b>	Alan Lovell alan.lovell@winchester-cathedral.org.uk

<b>Chair of Audit and Risk Committee</b>	Stephen Frost stephen.frost@winchester-cathedral.org.uk
<b>Protect</b> (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 252 Website: <a href="https://protect-advice.org.uk/">https://protect-advice.org.uk/</a>