



Amaze policy on whistleblowing

1. Introduction

The aim of this policy is to set out how Amaze staff, volunteers, trustees and parent carer forum (PCF) steering group members can safely and effectively “whistleblow” (more formally defined as making a disclosure in the public interest) if they know or have reason to believe malpractice may be occurring within the organisation or in joint work that Amaze is carrying out in partnership with another organisation. Amaze want to positively encourage staff, volunteers and trustees to speak up and speak out in these circumstances.

It follows the approach in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which provides protection for employees who act as whistleblowers. It reflects Amaze’s commitment to being a transparent and ethical organisation.

The policy is intended to deal with serious concerns about wrongdoings such as:

- a criminal offence
- a breach of a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual
- damage to the environment
- a deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above

These concerns may relate to the actions of another employee, volunteer, trustee, suppliers, contractors or anyone else undertaking work on behalf of Amaze.

This policy sits alongside Amaze’s Grievance Policy which should be used if Amaze employees have an issue about their own employment, including bullying and harassment; the Volunteer Policy which covers volunteers’ concerns about their volunteering; and the Complaints Policy which should be used by Amaze’s users if they are unhappy with the service. The Amaze Safeguarding Policy should be used alongside this policy in the case of an allegation of abuse by Amaze staff or volunteers.

This policy does not apply where Amaze staff, volunteers, trustees and PCF steering group members are concerned about practice in other organisations separate from Amaze and not connected to joint or partnership activities. If possible malpractice comes to their attention through their role at Amaze, they should discuss with their supervisor or line manager how best to proceed. This may be through the other organisation’s complaints or feedback procedure or through strategic relationships where Amaze or PCFs can raise issues formally or informally.

2. Principles

In applying this Whistleblowing Policy, Amaze trustees, managers and staff should bear in mind the following principles:

- It is not necessary for individuals who raise a concern to prove that the wrongdoing that is alleged has occurred or is likely to occur, but they do need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for their concern
- It will be assumed that all concerns raised under this policy are raised in good faith. However, in the unlikely event that a concern is found to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious, action under the Disciplinary Policy will be considered.

Approved by Management Committee 19/10/2016. Updated and approved by Mgt Ctte 15/05/19. Reviewed October 2022.



- Individuals who are responsible for any wrong-doing themselves and raise the issue under this policy will not be provided with immunity for the actual wrong-doing, but their positive action in bringing the matter to light will be taken into account.

3. Raising a concern

Individuals should in most cases, first report their concern to their supervisor or line manager, who will discuss with the individual how to proceed. If the relevant manager cannot deal with the matter, he or she will refer the concern to the Chief Executive. Dependent on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter, and who is suspected of the wrongdoing, the individual can report directly to the Chief Executive. If the matter concerns the Chief Executive, it should be raised with the Chair of Trustees.

Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns in writing where possible, setting out the background and history of their concerns (giving names, dates and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for their concerns.

Employees may wish to seek the assistance of a representative (for example from a trade union) before or after raising the concern. The representative may, where the employee so desires, raise the concern on behalf of the employee. Employees, volunteers or trustees may choose to be accompanied during any meetings or interviews about the concerns they have raised.

If any individual is unsure whether to use this procedure or they want independent advice at any stage, they may contact the charity Protect <https://protect-advice.org.uk/> which aims to stop harm by encouraging safe whistleblowing. Other possible contact points for advice are relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations, a solicitor and the police. Disclosures made to a legal advisor in the course of obtaining legal advice will be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

If the concern relates to the conduct of a person or body other than Amaze, but working in partnership with Amaze, the individual should raise their concern with the Chief Executive in the first instance. If the individual reasonably believes that the matter relates wholly or mainly to the conduct of a person or body other than Amaze or any other matter for which a person or body other than Amaze has legal responsibility, the disclosure may need to be made to that other person or body but should first be discussed with the Chief Executive. This will enable the individual to get support and advice about how best to raise the concern. This is not intended to prevent or discourage the act of “whistleblowing” in these circumstances.

If the concern relates to a safeguarding issue for a child or adult, the individual should consult Amaze’s Safeguarding Policy and should in most cases take their concern to Amaze’s designated person for safeguarding. However the individual may approach the relevant council’s social care safeguarding contact point for advice or contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Contact details for Amaze’s safeguarding lead and deputy, children’s and adult’s social care and the LADO are all in the Safeguarding Policy.

4. Protecting the individual raising a concern

Amaze will take appropriate steps to ensure that the individual raising the concern is not victimised and does not suffer any detriment as a result of whistleblowing. Employees who



raise a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their job, nor will it influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures.

The matter will be treated confidentially in the first instance. Every effort will be made not to reveal an employee's identity if this is their wish. However, in certain circumstances, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

Concerns may be raised anonymously and Amaze will still investigate. However, the person raising the concern must be aware that it may not always be possible to investigate fully in such circumstances or to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

5. How Amaze will deal with the concern

How the concern will be dealt with will depend on the nature of the issue. It is likely that further enquiries and investigation will be necessary. The concern may be investigated by the Chief Executive, the Trustees, through the disciplinary process or it may be referred to the police, other agencies, an external auditor or an independent investigator.

It may be necessary for the individual to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings. Amaze will give the individual feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed. The individual who raised the concern will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and their confidentiality will continue to be protected.