

St Peter's Church

Growing in love for God, each other, and the world

Whistleblowing policy and procedure

Policy & Purpose

Whistleblowing is the name given to the act of the disclosure of information to the employer or the relevant authority by an individual who knows, or suspects, that St Peter's Church is responsible for or taken part in some wrongdoing. The policy outlines the types of disclosures that are covered and the procedure for this.

Those making qualifying disclosures are protected against dismissal or detriment by The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Qualifying disclosures

Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as "qualifying disclosures". A "qualifying disclosure" means a disclosure of information that the employee/ volunteer genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that St Peter's Church has committed a "relevant failure" by:

- committing a criminal offence
- failing to comply with a legal obligation.
- a miscarriage of justice
- endangering the health and safety of an individual
- environmental damage or
- concealing any information relating to the above.

These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. St Peter's Church will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.

Employees/ volunteers must reasonably believe that the disclosure is "in the public interest". We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

Should the concern not meet the requirement to be a qualifying disclosure, you should raise this under St Peter's Church grievance policy. Where a concern is raised under the whistleblowing policy where it is not appropriate to do so, i.e. it relates to a personal grievance, the receiving manager will confirm that the matter will be addressed under the grievance policy.

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The procedure

In the first instance you should report any concerns you may have to your line manager. Where the concern relates to your line manager or it is not appropriate to make the report to your line manager, please report this to the PCC. All concerns reported will be treated in the utmost confidence. You may be asked to confirm any verbal concerns in writing or to confirm a written record of a verbal report.

In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally regarding your concerns and we would ask that you allow us to address them internally.

However, 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. Advice could be sought from Public Concern at Work, who operate an independent and confidential helpline 020 7305 7779.

Following receipt of a disclosure made under this policy, an investigation meeting will be held with the employee/ volunteer. The purpose of this meeting is to gather as much information as possible from the employee/ volunteer regarding their concerns, including whether they have any supporting evidence or can identify any witnesses.

After this meeting, the investigating manager will commence a full investigation into the concerns raised. The investigation will aim to gather all relevant information including relevant documentary evidence or witness statements. We will aim to complete the investigation as soon as possible following receipt of the disclosure.

Once the investigation is complete, the investigation manager will write to the employee/ volunteer confirming the outcome.

If the employee/ volunteer is not satisfied with the explanation or outcome, they may raise the matter with the appropriate official Church or regulatory body. Alternatively, employees/ volunteers may raise a formal complaint under St Peter's Church' grievance policy.

Formal action

Should formal action be required because of any disclosure made under this policy, this action will be carried out in accordance with the applicable internal policy. Any potential sanctions imposed will be fair and reasonable in line with the relevant policy.

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Protection against detrimental treatment

All employees/ volunteers who raise matters of concern under this policy are protected against detrimental treatment, up to and including dismissal, because they have made a disclosure.

Bullying, harassment, or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.