



FIRST STOP CENTRE

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- 1.1 First Stop Centre is committed to the highest standards of openness and fairness to its staff and volunteers.
- 1.2 Any staff member with a grievance should make that grievance clear to the Centre Manager and attempt to overcome the problem by discussion at local level and without recourse to this formal procedure. If, however, the staff member continues to feel aggrieved, he or she should inform the Centre Manager in writing.
- 1.3 The Centre Manager will consider the staff member's grievance fully, including seeking a discussion with the staff member concerned who may be accompanied by a friend or representative, if he or she so wishes. If the grievance is against another member of staff, the Centre Manager may also interview that other staff member in order to ascertain that member's understanding of the situation that led to the lodging of the grievance.
- 1.4 The Centre Manager will investigate the grievance fully and decide what action should be taken in the light of the findings of the investigation. The Centre Manager will convey the outcome of the enquiries made and the action to be taken to the aggrieved staff member in writing.
- 1.5 If the employee remains dissatisfied, he or she has the right to refer the matter in writing to the Management Committee for review. The Management Committee will give the staff member the opportunity to attend a meeting accompanied by a friend or representative, if he or she so wishes, to explain the grievance fully. The Management Committee may also interview the person against whom the grievance was lodged, as appropriate. The Management Committee will respond in writing within 7 working days.
- 1.6 If the Centre Manager is the person against whom the grievance is lodged, the employee has the right to raise the grievance directly with a member of the Management Committee. That member will undertake the steps referred to in paragraphs 1.2 to 1.4 above. If the employee remains dissatisfied, he or she has the right to refer the matter in writing to another member of the Management Committee for review. That member of the Management Committee will then undertake the review as set out in paragraph 1.5.



2. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Policy

- 2.1 First Stop Centre is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. An important aspect of this commitment is a means to allow staff and volunteers to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. Where an individual discovers information which he or she believes shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing, then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal.
- 2.2 No member of staff or volunteer should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns. The policy is intended to enable staff to raise concerns and disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety. The policy is designed to offer protection to staff who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made in good faith and in the reasonable belief that the disclosure tends to show malpractice or impropriety.
- 2.3 First Stop Centre will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the member of staff making the disclosure may be kept confidential as long as doing so does not hinder any enquiry. If a member of staff makes an allegation in good faith but which is not confirmed following subsequent investigation or enquiry no action will be taken against that member of staff.

Procedure

- 2.4 The person receiving a complaint of malpractice or impropriety must take note of the complaint and pass the information on to the Centre Manager as soon as possible. The Centre Manager will investigate the complaint.
- 2.5 If there is evidence of criminal activity, the Centre Manager should inform the police. Any internal investigation must not hinder a formal police investigation.
- 2.6 The investigating officer should follow these steps:
 - Full details and any clarification required should be obtained.
 - The member of staff against whom any complaint has been made should be informed as soon as reasonably practicable. The member will have the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative.
 - The allegation should be investigated fully by the investigating officer and a written report of his or her findings provided to the Management Committee
 - Management Committee will decide what action to take in the light of the report provided. If the complaint is shown to be justified, disciplinary or other appropriate action will then be commenced.
 - The complainant should be kept informed of progress of the investigation and of the final outcome.



- 2.7 If the complainant is not satisfied that the complaint has been dealt with properly, he or she has the right to raise it with a member of the Management Committee who will undertake a review.
- 2.8 If the Centre Manager is the subject of the complaint or is in some other way related to it, the employee has the right to raise the complaint directly with a member of the Management Committee. That member will undertake the steps referred to in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.6 above. If the employee remains dissatisfied, he or she has the right to refer the matter in writing to another member of the Management Committee for review. That member of the Management Committee will then undertake the review as set out in paragraph 2.7.
- 2.9 If the complainant is not satisfied by the final outcome, First Stop Centre recognises the individual's right to make disclosures to prescribed outside bodies, such as the Health and Safety Executive.