



Together Our Community (TOC)

Whistleblowing Policy

Last updated: August 2026

Applies to: all staff, volunteers, and trustees

Purpose

Together Our Community (TOC) is committed to conducting its work with honesty, integrity, and openness. We encourage a culture in which staff, volunteers, and anyone connected with our work feels safe to speak up if they have a genuine concern about wrongdoing, poor practice, or behaviour that puts people at risk.

This policy explains what whistleblowing means, what kinds of concerns it covers, how to raise a concern, and the protections available to anyone who does so in good faith.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing means raising a concern about something you have witnessed or become aware of in the course of your involvement with TOC that you believe to be wrong, illegal, unsafe, or contrary to our values. This is different from a personal grievance, which is a concern about your own treatment and is dealt with under a separate process.

What Concerns Does This Policy Cover?

This policy covers concerns about:

- conduct that may be illegal, unethical, or in breach of TOC's policies
- risk to the health, safety, or welfare of any person, including the young adults we support
- safeguarding concerns relating to a young adult, staff member, or volunteer
- financial irregularities, fraud, or misuse of TOC resources
- attempts to cover up any of the above

If your concern relates directly to the safeguarding of a young adult, please also refer to TOC's Safeguarding Adults Policy.

How to Raise a Concern

TOC wants anyone with a genuine concern to feel confident about coming forward. In most cases, concerns can be raised informally in the first instance. If you are unsure whether something needs to be reported, it is always better to raise it and let it be assessed.

Raising a concern internally

In the first instance, please speak directly to the CEO or a member of the leadership team. You may do this in person, by phone, or in writing to contact@tocommunity.org.uk.

If your concern is about the CEO or a member of the leadership team, please ask for details on a member of the Board of Trustees so you can contact them directly.

Where possible, please provide as much detail as you can: what you witnessed or heard, when it happened, who was involved, and any other relevant information. You do not need to have proof — a genuine, reasonable concern is enough to allow the charity to investigate.

Raising a concern externally

If you feel unable to raise a concern internally, or if you have raised it internally and do not feel it has been addressed appropriately, you may contact an external body. Depending on the nature of the concern, this could include:

- The Charity Commission for England and Wales (charitycommission.gov.uk)
- The Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)
- West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board
- The police, where a criminal offence may have been committed
- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) — a charity providing free, confidential advice to whistleblowers (protect-advice.org.uk)

Confidentiality

TOC will make every effort to handle concerns raised under this policy with discretion and confidentiality. We will not disclose the identity of the person who raised the concern without their consent, unless we are legally required to do so or where it is not possible to investigate the concern properly without doing so.

If this situation arises, we will discuss it with the person that has raised the concern before proceeding.

Protection from Detriment

Anyone who raises a concern in good faith under this policy will be protected. TOC will not tolerate any form of retaliation, victimisation, or unfair treatment as a result of someone speaking up.

If you believe you have suffered detriment as a result of raising a concern, please report this to the CEO or a Trustee as soon as possible.

This protection does not extend to concerns that are raised maliciously or that the person knows to be untrue.

Anonymous Concerns

You may raise a concern anonymously if you prefer. Anonymous concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as far as is reasonably possible, though it can be more difficult to investigate thoroughly without the ability to follow up with the person who raised the concern.

What Happens After a Concern is Raised?

The person receiving the concern will acknowledge it promptly and decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include: an internal investigation; referral to an external agency; or, if the concern appears to relate to a safeguarding matter, action under the Safeguarding Adults Policy.

We will keep you informed of progress and outcome wherever it is appropriate to do so. In some cases, the outcome may need to remain confidential.

Record Keeping

A record will be kept of all concerns raised under this policy and of the action taken in response. These records will be held securely and in accordance with TOC's Data Protection Policy.

Contact

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact: contact@tocommunity.org.uk

For external support and advice: Protect — protect-advice.org.uk — 020 3117 2520