



Whistleblowing Policy

Effective from: 05 January 2026

Review date: 05 January 2027

Applies to: Staff, Volunteers, Trustees, Contractors, and Partners

Location: England

1. Purpose of this Policy

Sportainment is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. As an organisation working with children and young people aged 10–25, we recognise our duty to ensure their safety and wellbeing at all times.

This policy enables anyone connected to the charity to raise concerns about wrongdoing, risks, or misconduct without fear of victimisation. It supports our safeguarding responsibilities and aligns with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) and Charity Commission guidance.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns that are in the public interest. These concerns usually relate to wrongdoing that affects others, particularly children and young people in our care.

Whistleblowing is **not** the same as raising a personal grievance (e.g., disputes about working conditions). Those issues should be addressed through the grievance procedure.

3. Issues Covered by This Policy

Concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Safeguarding risks or failures to protect children and young people
- Criminal activity
- Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- Neglect or exploitation
- Financial misconduct, fraud, or misuse of charity funds
- Breaches of legal or regulatory obligations
- Serious health and safety risks
- Cover-ups or deliberate concealment of wrongdoing
- Behaviour that is discriminatory, unethical, or inconsistent with our values

If you are unsure whether something counts as whistleblowing, you are encouraged to raise it anyway.

4. Who Can Raise a Concern

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Trustees
- Contractors and agency workers
- Partner organisations
- Anyone else representing or working with the charity

5. How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be raised as early as possible. You can report verbally or in writing to:

a. Your Line Manager or Supervisor

If appropriate and safe to do so.

b. The Designated Whistleblowing Officer

Name/Role: [Insert]

Phone: [Insert]

c. The Safeguarding Lead

For concerns involving children and young people.

Name/Role: Fiona Handley/Designated Safeguarding Lead

d. The Chair of Trustees

If the concern involves senior management or the safeguarding lead.

e. External Reporting Options

If internal reporting is not appropriate, you may contact:

- **Charity Commission for England and Wales**
- **Local Authority Children's Services**
- **Police (if a crime or immediate risk is suspected)**
- **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line**

You do not need proof of wrongdoing — a reasonable belief is enough.

6. Confidentiality

All concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Your identity will only be shared if:

- You give consent
- It is required by law
- It is necessary to protect a child or young person

Anonymous reports will be considered, though they may limit our ability to investigate.

7. Protection from Victimisation

No one who raises a concern in good faith will suffer:

- Dismissal
- Disciplinary action
- Bullying or harassment
- Loss of opportunities
- Any other form of retaliation

Any attempt to victimise a whistleblower will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

8. How Concerns Will Be Handled

Once a concern is raised:

1. It will be acknowledged within **5 working days**
2. An initial assessment will determine the appropriate response
3. An investigation will be carried out by an impartial person
4. Outcomes may include:
 - Safeguarding action
 - Disciplinary procedures
 - Reporting to external authorities
 - Improvements to policies or practice
5. You will be informed of the outcome as far as confidentiality allows

9. Safeguarding Priority

Any concern involving the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person will be treated as a safeguarding matter and handled in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy and statutory guidance, including *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

10. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

If a concern is found to be deliberately false or malicious, this may result in disciplinary action. However, honest mistakes or concerns raised in good faith will never be penalised.

11. Training and Awareness

All staff, volunteers, and trustees will receive training on:

- Recognising concerns
- How to report them
- Their rights under this policy

- Safeguarding responsibilities

This policy will be included in induction materials and made publicly available.

12. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- Charity Commission guidance is updated
- A significant incident occurs