

Whistleblowing policy

Appletree Treatment Centre (ATC)



Approved by: Rowan Knapton (Principal)

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Next review due: April 2026



Introduction -

- Appletree Treatment Centre (ATC) is committed to continuous improvement in the quality of its services, and to the maintenance of a safe living and working environment for both children and staff.
- ATC is proud of its staff and appreciate their hard work, dedication and achievements. In any organisation, however, problems will occur. In such circumstances, staff need to know what their responsibilities are, and how ATC will help them.
- This policy has been developed to encourage staff to accept that they will be supported when concerns are raised about bad practice within ATC, which impacts upon the children and other staff.

In response to any concerns the Principal and Senior Team at ATC will endeavor to take prompt action to facilitate positive solutions and to develop a receptive culture, which encourages and enables staff to raise serious concerns.

The Fundamental Beliefs:

1. A high-quality service is delivered by staff who are competent, honest and dedicated, and that good practice is found throughout ATC.
2. Staff who have genuine concerns about care and education practices, will be supported by ATC.
3. Staff have a duty to speak out about any practice with which they feel uncomfortable without fear of victimisation or reprisal.
4. Staff can be trusted to make appropriate use of this policy, in the spirit with which it has been developed.
5. Staff will receive full explanatory communication and feedback during and at the culmination of the procedure.

Problems are usually best and most quickly resolved, and with less friction, within everyday working relationships.
Only when clear procedures of line management are genuinely not appropriate or have not led to the problem being solved should this policy be used.



This Policy is about:

- Living with our conscience and feeling comfortable with the actions of ourselves and others as good employers and employees.
- Putting our principles into action and having the realism and the courage to admit to the possibility of bad practice and do something about it.
- Staff supporting the policy and using it positively and appropriately.
- ATC supporting staff who speak out about genuine concerns.
- Not being a grievance, disciplinary or child protection procedure in disguise.
- Staff feeling comfortable to speak out and the earlier the better.
- Clearly, in an ideal situation bad practice should be prevented by use of proper line management processes, so that staff are saved from suffering distress. For various reasons, however, this may not always occur.
- It is never too soon to speak out. The sooner bad practice is reported, the sooner it can be stopped. No matter when an incident of bad practice has occurred, if it genuinely appears nothing has been done about it, then concern should be raised. Sometimes incidents occur suddenly, whilst some practices develop over a long period of time, but if no one is told about bad practice, no one can act to eliminate it.
- All managers must expect staff to say if they have a legitimate concern about a practice issue, a decision or its reason. This is often all that is needed to prevent misunderstandings and promote sound practice.
- The whistleblowing procedure does not require absolute proof of bad practice that would deter the raising of concerns by responsible staff and is a matter for the Mediator in any case. Sometimes rumour or suspicion are indicators of problems.
- The whistleblowing procedure steers staff towards certain people who may be trusted to be relatively independent.

The procedures which staff should follow are:

1. Ideally, colleagues should question the offending practice at source.
2. An approach by staff can be to the Line Manager, provided that person is not the subject of or involved in the complaint.



3. If the Line Manager is not the appropriate person to deal with the matter or if he/she has failed to take the necessary action, staff should approach the Senior Leaderships Team.

What will the Senior Leadership Team do?

- In instances where poor practice directly involves the children, the Senior Leader will consult with the LADO to ascertain whether a safeguarding referral should be made (see Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for guidance).
- If a LADO referral is required, then the matter is handed over to the member of the Safeguarding Team. If the involvement of the Safeguarding Team is not required, the Senior Leader will instigate an internal investigation according to the ATC HR procedures and in consultation with the ATC HR consultants. (See Child Protection and Safeguarding policy for guidance).

If staff feel that they cannot make a whistleblowing referral to staff within ATC (because it may for example be about a senior member of staff) they can approach external agencies to express their concerns.

The Warner Report makes specific recommendation that employers should accept that staff should be able to raise significant concerns outside their normal line Management when they consider the Line Manager has been unresponsive or is the subject of concern.

Before making an allegation about a member of staff's practice directly to Ofsted or the local Safeguarding Team, staff should consider:

- Am I acting in good faith?
- Do I believe there are reasonable grounds that my information is accurate?
- Have I taken all reasonable steps to get the matter resolved internally before disclosing the information to an outside individual or agency?
- What is my motivation?

If after answering these questions you still feel the correct course of action is to voice your concerns outside of ATC, contact either the local Safeguarding Team 03003732724 or Ofsted 0300 123 1231.

You can also get advice and guidance from the NSPCC by clicking on the following link [Whistleblowing Advice Line](#) they will provide support to employees wishing to raise concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in their own or other organisations. You can contact the Advice Line on 0808 800 5000, or find out more about it on their website at www.nspcc.org.uk



The Warner Report and the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, both refer to quality of service and the need to take complaints seriously.

ATC wants to make clear that it is the duty of staff to take action on their concerns about poor practice, and of the management to be receptive to that action.

This policy pre-empts a number of existing procedures already in place at Appletree Treatment Centre Ltd.

- Grievance Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Supervision and Appraisal
- Child Protection Procedure
- In-service Training Resources
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

It is vital that all staff at ATC know they have a duty to act responsibly and to speak out against bad practice and malpractice. Not to report an incident is a neglect of that responsibility.