The King's Award for Voluntary Service

Newbury RDA
Newbury Riding for the Disabled
Charity Number: 1121113

Newbury RDA Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction
Newbury RDA (NRDA) is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity, integrity, and accountability. In line with that commitment, we expect employees, volunteers and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the charity's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

This whistle-blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and volunteers to raise serious concerns and to ensure that Newbury RDA is able to uphold its zero tolerance of inappropriate behaviour.

Aims and Scope
This policy is designed to enable employees and volunteers of Newbury RDA to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which fall within the scope of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013. Qualifying disclosures are those that someone believes that one or more of the following is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

a) A criminal offence
b) The breach of a legal obligation or statute
c) Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
d) A danger to health and safety or the environment
e) Miscarriage of justice
f) Deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above matters

Issues that fall outside the scope of this policy should be raised according to Newbury RDA's complaints procedure, which is complementary to this policy.

A disclosure will be protected provided the employee or volunteer:
• Makes the disclosure in good faith
• Reasonably believes that the relevant failure relates to the improper administration of the charity (RDA UK or Newbury RDA) and funds given, or held, for charitable purposes
• Reasonably believes that the information disclosed, and any allegation contained in it, are substantially true

This policy aims to:
• Encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns
• Provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
• Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
• Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith

NRDA recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what is reported is true, staff and volunteers should have nothing to fear because they will be doing a duty to their charity and those for whom you are providing a service.

NRDA will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of people making a disclosure (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality
NRDA will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

NRDA will not, without the complainant's consent, knowingly disclose the identity of a complainant to anyone other than a person involved in the investigation.

Anonymous Allegations This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the RDA UK.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:
• The seriousness of the issues raised

• The credibility of the concern
• The likelihood of confirming the allegation from other attributable sources

Untrue Allegations
If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes a frivolous, malicious, or vexatious allegation, and particularly if he or she persists with making them, action may be taken against that individual.

How to raise a concern / timescales
Concerns should be reported to a line manager or Group Chair (Newbury RDA's Group Chair is Lucy Atherton. chairman@newburyrda.co.uk). This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if the allegation is about a Group Chair, then concerns should be directed to the Chief Executive, (who is also the Monitoring Officer). Complaints against the Chief Executive should be passed to the Chair of the RDA Board. Complaints about a Board member should be made to the Chair. Complaints about the Chair should be made to the other members of the HR Committee

Concerns should be raised in writing. Anyone who wishes to make a written report should mention the following:
• The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates, names, and positions of those who may be in a position to have contributed to the allegation)
• The specific reason for the concern; although no one is expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for concern.

The concern should be reported at the earliest opportunity so that action can be taken.

The complainant has the right to bypass the direct management structure and take their complaint direct to the Chief Executive or Chair of the Board for RDA UK. The Chair has the right to refer the complaint back to management if he/she feels that the management, without any conflict of interest, can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

Actions upon receipt of an allegation
• The investigating officer will record details of the allegation, fully investigating and gathering as much information as possible with assistance where appropriate.
• If there is evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer should inform the police. RDA will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.
• If there is evidence of fraud, potential fraud or other financial irregularity, the Treasurer will be informed within 5 working days of receipt of the allegation.
• If there is evidence of harm to children or Adults at Risk the appropriate authorities will be informed immediately.
• A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement. The report will be passed to the Group Chair, Chief Executive or Chair of the Board of Trustees as appropriate.
• The Group Chair, Chief Executive or Chair of the Board of Trustees will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate procedures.
• The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome.
• If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes must be passed to the Association's auditors and insurers to enable a review of the procedures.
• If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, RDA recognises the lawful rights to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators), or, where justified, elsewhere.

Timescales
Due to the varied nature of these sorts of complaints, which may involve internal investigators and / or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality and depth of those investigations.

The investigating officer, should as soon as practically possible, send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing the outcome of the investigation and on the action that is proposed. If the investigation is a prolonged one, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded.

Responsible Officer The Chief Executive (who is also the Monitoring Officer) has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of whistleblowing within RDA. He or she will maintain a record of concerns raised to RDA

UK and the outcome (but in a form which does not endanger confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the Board of Trustees of Riding for the Disabled Association.