

Triratna Buddhist Community (Leeds) – Whistleblowing and Raising a Concern Policy

Introduction – what is whistleblowing, and why is it important?

Triratna Buddhist Community (Leeds) strives to:

- Support a culture of integrity and transparency
- Speak up when something doesn't feel right.
- Support others who raise concerns.
- Help build a culture where safeguarding and ethical conduct are everyone's responsibility.

As part of our practice in line with The Buddha's teaching.

Whistleblowing is the act of raising a concern about wrongdoing, risk, or unsafe practice within an organisation, or when necessary, to an appropriate public body outside of the organisation.

It allows anyone connected to the organisation - whether an order member, trustee, mitra, volunteer, community member or member of staff - to speak up when they believe something is not right.

Whistleblowing helps protect people, uphold ethical standards, and make sure that concerns are addressed fairly and responsibly.

The purpose of this policy is to provide people in a position of trust, order members, trustees, mitras, volunteers, community members or employees with support and guidelines to report severe misconducts which have occurred or very likely to occur in our organisation in which a person in a position of trust, employee or volunteer is or was in contact through their activities at the centre, contact with members of our community or work, without a risk of being subject for retaliation. It is intended as a tool for reducing risks and maintaining trust in our operations by enabling us to detect and act at an early stage.

The principles set out in this policy apply to all of those who are, or have been, in a context of activities at the centre, contact with members of our community. or work with us, including:

- people in a position of trust, order member, trustees, mitras, volunteers, community member or employee including trainees/students,
- self-employee or volunteers/consultants,
- persons subject for recruitment
- other persons who are active in the organisation or who are/have been in a context in a context of activities at the centre, contact with members of our community or work, under our control and management.

All trustees of Triratna Buddhist Community (Leeds) and other persons in a position of trust have a duty to be aware of the contents of these guidelines and any updates to them, and to comply therewith.

All reports made in accordance with the safeguarding policies, compliments and complaints policy and these guidelines will be received, recorded (if orally reported) and processed in accordance with those policies.

All members of our community including people in a position of trust, employees and volunteers may report concerns or suspected misconducts when it becomes apparent in our organisation.

A “misconduct” means an act or omission occurred (or most likely to occur) in our organisation which is considered as harmful to the public interest, which the person in a position of trust, employee or volunteer has received knowledge of in a work-related context.

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 Whistleblowers who are employees or workers of this organisation are protected by law in addition to this policy. Under this law, whistleblowers must not be treated unfairly or lose their job because they report suspected wrongdoing.

How to report

Please raise your concerns using the procedures set out in our Safeguarding Policies and Compliments and Complaints Policies unless the situation merits reporting directly to a public body outside the organisation.

The concern raised or complaint will be dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Policies and Compliments and Complaints Policies.

Protection for whistleblowers

- You will not face any retaliation, disciplinary action or disadvantage for raising a concern in good faith.
- Our Organisation aims to protect whistleblowers from retaliation or bullying.
- However Malicious or knowingly false allegations may be treated as misconduct.
- Our Organisation aims to respect confidentiality wherever possible and offer anonymous reporting options if needed, in accordance with our Safeguarding Policies and Compliments and Complaints Policies

Reporting outside of the organisation

If you feel your concern has not been addressed, or the issue is ongoing, you may contact a prescribed external body, such as:

- The Charity Commission
- Local authority safeguarding teams
- ACAS and trade unions
- Other relevant regulators (e.g., Health and Safety Executive)

Consider reporting internally before public disclosure. Speaking to the media may not offer the same protections and could compromise confidentiality or safeguarding outcomes.

Reporting through media

A person may also receive protection when reporting publicly, provided that:

- a report has been made through an external reporting channel, without being appropriately addressed or investigated, or no appropriate remedial action has been taken within the set time frame,
- reporting publicly is required in order to safeguard children or vulnerable adults or if there is an obvious risk of breaches relating to the health and safety of people or the environment, if there is evidence of serious criminal offences relating to financing or the environment, or
- when the reporter has valid reasons to believe that they would suffer retaliation in connection with external reporting.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

This version approved by the Trustees 6 April 2026