

Whistleblowing Policy

Project Abundance

Date: [July 2025]

Review Date: [01/07/2026]

Approved by Trustees: [Lewis Venum, Jan Peacock, Jennifer Mason]

1. Policy Statement

Project Abundance is committed to the highest standards of honesty, openness, and accountability. We encourage staff, interns, trustees, and volunteers to raise concerns about wrongdoing at an early stage and in the right way.

This policy provides a framework for raising concerns (“whistleblowing”) about malpractice, misconduct, or illegal acts, without fear of reprisal.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees, interns, trustees, and volunteers.
- Contractors, partners, and third parties engaged in Project Abundance’s activities.

It covers concerns about:

- Criminal offences or breaches of law.
- Safeguarding concerns involving children or adults at risk.
- Health and safety risks.
- Environmental damage.
- Financial malpractice, fraud, or mismanagement.
- Breaches of GDPR or data protection.
- Any attempt to conceal wrongdoing.

Personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, disputes about employment terms) are not covered by this policy — these should be dealt with under the **Grievance Procedure**.

3. Principles

- **Protection:** No one who raises a genuine concern under this policy will suffer detriment, even if the concern is later found to be mistaken.
 - **Confidentiality:** Reports will be handled in strict confidence, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis.
 - **Impartiality:** Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fairly.
 - **Good Faith:** Concerns must be raised honestly and not maliciously.
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4. How to Raise a Concern

- **Step 1:** Raise your concern with your line manager, supervisor, or project lead.
- **Step 2:** If you feel unable to raise it with them, contact the **Designated Whistleblowing Officer (DWO)**:
 - **Name/Role:** Lewis Venum
 - **Email:** contact@project-abundance.co.uk
 - **Phone:** 07399963704
- **Step 3:** If the concern involves the DWO or you are dissatisfied with the response, escalate to the **Chair of Trustees**.

Concerns should be raised in writing where possible, with details of the issue, dates, people involved, and any evidence.

5. Investigation Process

- The DWO (or Chair of Trustees) will acknowledge the concern within **5 working days**.
 - An initial assessment will determine whether a full investigation is required.
 - Investigations will be carried out fairly, confidentially, and without delay.
 - Outcomes may include disciplinary action, policy changes, or referral to external authorities.
 - The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, subject to legal/privacy constraints.
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6. External Reporting

If you believe your concern has not been addressed properly, you may report it to an external body such as:

- **The CIC Regulator at Companies House** (if it involves serious misconduct or misuse of funds).
 - **The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** (for safety breaches).
 - **The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)** (for data protection breaches).
 - **The Police** (for criminal offences).
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7. Protection Against Detriment

- Victimisation or retaliation against anyone raising a concern in good faith will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
 - Malicious or knowingly false allegations may result in disciplinary action.
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8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the trustees of Project Abundance and updated to reflect changes in law and best practice.