

# Whistleblowing Policy

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*Ensuring Transparency, Integrity, and Compliance with UK Legislation*

## 1. Introduction

The Yorkshire ADHD Clinic is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. In accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) and all relevant UK legislation and regulations, this Whistleblowing Policy provides a robust framework for raising concerns related to wrongdoing or malpractice within the clinic. Although The Yorkshire ADHD Clinic is currently operated by a single staff member, this policy ensures that all legal obligations are met and provides guidance in the event that the service expands or external parties become involved.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Encourage a culture of honesty and transparency.
- Provide clear procedures for raising concerns and making disclosures in the public interest.
- Protect individuals who raise genuine concerns from detrimental treatment, victimisation, or dismissal.
- Ensure compliance with UK whistleblowing legislation, including PIDA and relevant healthcare regulations.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- The sole staff member (the proprietor).
- Any individuals who may work with or on behalf of The Yorkshire ADHD Clinic in the future (e.g., contractors, volunteers, students).
- External parties such as patients, carers, or other stakeholders who wish to report malpractice connected to the clinic's services.

## 4. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing refers to the disclosure of information by a worker, or external party, which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This might include:

- Criminal activity or offences;
- Failure to comply with legal or regulatory obligations;
- Miscarriages of justice;
- Health and safety dangers, including risks to patients or the public;
- Environmental damage;
- Deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above.

Disclosures made under this policy must be in the public interest and not for personal gain or as part of a personal grievance.

## 5. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended)
- Health and Social Care Act 2008
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) Fundamental Standards
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018
- Relevant guidance from the NHS and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

## 6. Raising a Concern

As the sole staff member, it is important to recognise and act upon any concerns you identify in your own practice or the operation of the clinic. If and when additional staff or associates are engaged, this policy shall apply to them as well.

If you, or another individual, have reasonable grounds to suspect wrongdoing:

- Document the concern, including dates, details, and any supporting evidence.
- Consider whether the issue can be resolved internally or requires external reporting.
- For self-identified issues, maintain a written record and review your own processes to mitigate recurrence.
- If the concern relates to yourself and presents a conflict of interest or regulatory risk, seek advice from an external body such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC), the NHS, a professional regulator (like the GMC or HCPC), or a legal advisor.
- For patients, families, or external parties wishing to provide a disclosure, a dedicated contact method (such as an official clinic email) should be provided for written submissions.

## External Reporting Contacts

For concerns which cannot be satisfactorily resolved internally—especially those which are serious, ongoing, or involve breaches of law or regulatory standards—the following external channels may be used:

- Care Quality Commission (CQC): for breaches of care standards.
- Professional regulators (e.g., General Medical Council, Health and Care Professions Council): for issues concerning professional conduct or registration.
- Police: for criminal matters.
- Information Commissioner's Office (ICO): for data protection and privacy issues.

## 7. Protection and Confidentiality

Anyone raising a genuine concern under this policy will be protected from victimisation, dismissal, or other detrimental actions, as required by law. All disclosures will be treated in confidence wherever possible, and the identity of the whistleblower will not be revealed without prior consent, unless required by law.

If you make a disclosure, you are entitled to:

- Have your concern taken seriously and investigated appropriately.
- Receive feedback on the outcome of the investigation, where possible.
- Be protected from retaliation for raising the concern in good faith.

Malicious or knowingly false disclosures may result in disciplinary or legal action.

## 8. Investigation Procedure

If a concern is raised:

- Record all details of the disclosure, including the date, time, the substance of the concern, and any evidence provided.
- Where appropriate, seek external advice or escalate the concern to a relevant authority.
- Take steps to investigate the issue objectively and fairly, documenting all findings.
- If the concern relates to the sole proprietor, consider voluntary suspension of certain functions, pending advice or resolution from an external authority.
- Communicate transparently with all relevant stakeholders while upholding confidentiality.

## 9. Handling Disclosures from Patients or External Parties

Patients, carers, or other stakeholders may observe or suspect malpractice or wrongdoing. Such parties should be encouraged to:

- Raise their concern in writing to the designated clinic contact address or email.
- Provide as much detail and supporting evidence as possible.
- Be assured that their disclosure will be treated with respect and confidentiality, in line with this policy and all relevant standards.

## 10. Record Keeping

A secure log of all whistleblowing disclosures, records, and investigations must be maintained, in compliance with GDPR and data protection requirements. Records should be kept for a minimum of six years, or as required by regulation, and only accessible to authorised parties.

## 11. Review and Policy Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or the operational structure of The Yorkshire ADHD Clinic. Updates will be documented and communicated to all relevant parties.

## 12. Support and Advice

The Yorkshire ADHD Clinic recognises that whistleblowing can be a stressful experience. Staff and third parties are encouraged to seek support and advice from:

- Public Concern at Work (now known as Protect): an independent whistleblowing charity in the UK
- Professional bodies and regulators
- Legal advisors
- Trade unions or staff associations (if applicable in future expansions)

## 13. Policy Statement

The Yorkshire ADHD Clinic takes all concerns regarding malpractice, wrongdoing, or breaches of law extremely seriously. The Clinic is committed to upholding the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability, and will ensure that all disclosures are managed in accordance with the law and best practice.

This policy will be made available to all staff, patients, and stakeholders, and is published on the clinic's website and/or patient information packs.



## 14. Contact Details

For all whistleblowing disclosures or advice, please use the following contact method:

Email: [Add your secure clinic email contact here]

Postal Address: [Add clinic postal address if appropriate]

If you would prefer to make a disclosure to an external body, please refer to the contact details above for the CQC, GMC/HCPC, or other relevant authority.

Date of policy implementation: [Insert Date]

Date of next review: [Insert Date]

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This policy should be tailored further as the clinic's circumstances change or if new legislation or guidance is introduced. It is designed to fully comply with current UK whistleblowing law and healthcare regulations and to ensure ongoing protection for anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith.

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