



Whistleblowing (Speaking Up) Policy Bridge the Gap Child Mental Health CIC

1. Purpose

Bridge the Gap Child Mental Health CIC is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, safeguarding, openness and accountability in everything we do.

We believe that everyone working with or on behalf of Bridge the Gap has a responsibility to speak up if they become aware of behaviour or practices that may place children, families, colleagues, volunteers, the organisation or the public at risk.

This policy explains how concerns can be raised safely and confidentially and how Bridge the Gap will respond.

This policy is written in accordance with the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998**, as amended by the **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013**, and should be read alongside our Safeguarding Policy, Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Code of Conduct.

2. Scope

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Bridge the Gap, including:

- Employees
- Casual workers
- Volunteers
- Students and work experience placements
- Contractors and consultants
- Associate practitioners
- Agency workers



- Directors and Board Members
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3. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of information that an individual reasonably believes shows serious wrongdoing or a risk of wrongdoing that is in the public interest.

Speaking up helps protect children, families, colleagues and the wider community. Bridge the Gap encourages concerns to be raised as early as possible so that appropriate action can be taken.

Whistleblowing is different from a personal grievance. If your concern relates solely to your own employment, working conditions or contractual arrangements, this should usually be raised through the Grievance Policy.

4. Concerns That Should Be Raised

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Safeguarding

- Abuse or neglect of a child or adult at risk.
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures.
- Failure to report safeguarding concerns.
- A person working with children who may be unsuitable to do so.

Professional Practice

- Unsafe clinical or professional practice.
- Serious breaches of professional standards.
- Conduct that places children, families or colleagues at risk.
- Deliberate concealment of poor practice.



Health and Safety

- Serious risks to health and safety.
- Unsafe working environments.
- Failure to manage significant risks appropriately.

Financial or Organisational Misconduct

- Fraud.
- Theft.
- Bribery or corruption.
- Misuse of charitable or public funds.
- Deliberate financial irregularities.

Legal or Regulatory Concerns

- Criminal offences.
- Breaches of legislation.
- Serious breaches of organisational policies.
- Deliberate attempts to conceal wrongdoing.

Information Governance

- Serious breaches of confidentiality.
- Misuse of personal information.
- Significant data protection concerns.

5. Raising a Concern

Where possible, concerns should be raised promptly.



In most circumstances concerns should initially be raised with your Line Manager.

If this is not appropriate because:

- your manager is involved;
- the concern relates to senior leadership; or
- you do not feel able to speak to your manager,

you should raise your concern with one of the following:

- Clinical Director
- Director
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (where safeguarding concerns are involved)

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing.

Where possible, include:

- what happened;
- who was involved;
- dates, times or locations (if known);
- whether anyone else witnessed the incident; and
- any evidence available.

You are not expected to investigate concerns yourself before reporting them.

6. How We Will Respond

Every concern will be taken seriously.

Bridge the Gap will:

- acknowledge concerns promptly;



- consider the most appropriate course of action;
- undertake or commission an appropriate investigation where required;
- maintain confidentiality wherever possible;
- provide feedback where appropriate and lawful to do so; and
- take action where concerns are substantiated.

Some concerns may instead be managed under:

- Safeguarding Procedures
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Capability Procedures
- Fitness to Practise Policy
- External reporting requirements

Where a safeguarding concern is identified, safeguarding procedures will always take priority.

7. Confidentiality

Bridge the Gap will make every effort to protect the identity of anyone raising a genuine concern.

However, complete confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed if disclosure is required by law or where evidence is needed as part of an investigation.

Anonymous disclosures will be considered, although it may be more difficult to investigate concerns where further information cannot be obtained.

8. Protection for Whistleblowers

Bridge the Gap is committed to creating a culture where staff feel safe to speak up.



No employee, volunteer or worker will suffer victimisation, harassment, discrimination or any other detriment because they have raised a genuine concern which they reasonably believe to be in the public interest.

This protection applies even where an investigation concludes that no wrongdoing occurred, provided the concern was raised honestly and reasonably.

Any attempt to victimise or disadvantage an individual for raising a concern may itself be treated as a disciplinary matter.

9. False or Malicious Allegations

Bridge the Gap recognises that genuine concerns may sometimes prove to be unfounded.

No action will be taken against anyone who raises a concern honestly and reasonably.

However, deliberately false, malicious or vexatious allegations may result in disciplinary action.

10. Independent Advice

If you are unsure whether your concern is covered by this policy or would like confidential independent advice before raising it, you can contact:

Protect – Speak Up Stop Harm

Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk>

Confidential Advice Line:

020 3117 2520



11. Monitoring and Review

Bridge the Gap will review this policy regularly to ensure it reflects current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.

Approved by:

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