East Sussex Community Voice

Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Schedule

Version	Date of next review by ESCV Board	Date of adoption by ESCV Board
1	n/a	August 2013
2	March 2016	March 2016
3	March 2017	September 2025
4	September 2027	
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1 Introduction

1.1 East Sussex Community Voice CIC (ESCV) is committed to being an open, honest and accountable organisation.

1.2 All representatives of ESCV must demonstrate honesty and integrity (as defined in the Nolan Principles) in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to enable staff, board members, volunteers and partners to raise any serious concerns (including dangerous, illegal or improper activity) within ESCV, before going to outside resolution, without fear of subsequent victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

1.4 This policy outlines our approach to whistleblowing, the practical steps people should take to raise concerns, and how our process is governed.

1.5 The policy aims to:

- Encourage confidence in raising and acting on concerns about practice or behaviour
- Provide opportunities to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure responses to concerns are provided, including steps to take if an outcome is not satisfactory
- Reassure individuals they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that a disclosure is in the public interest

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1.6 It is the responsibility of all board members, employees, volunteers and partners to report dishonesty or suspected dishonesty in accordance with this Whistleblowing Policy.

2 What is a Whistleblower?

2.1 The government definition of a 'whistleblower' is if you're a worker and you report certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you've seen in the course of your work - though not always.

2.2 The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, for example, the general public.

2.3 You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future.

2.4 As a whistleblower you're protected by law - you should not be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.

2.5 Major concerns that count as whistleblowing may include:

- a criminal offence, for example fraud
- someone's health and safety are in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

2.6 Concerns that do not count as 'whistleblowing' include personal grievances (for example, bullying, harassment, discrimination) and are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless your case is in the public interest. These should be reported adhering to ESCV's Complaints Policy and/or Volunteer Problem Solving Policy. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) provides independent help and advice on resolving a workplace dispute.

2.7 It is not necessary for an individual who raises a concern to prove the wrongdoing that is alleged to have occurred or is likely to occur. No action will be taken against a whistle blower if an allegation is made in good faith but is not confirmed by any investigation.

2.8 If an individual knowingly or maliciously makes an untrue allegation (e.g. to cause disruption within our organisation), we may take appropriate disciplinary action against them, and it may constitute gross misconduct.

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2.9 Employees, board members and volunteers should note that they will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

3 Raising a concern: ESCV employees, board members and volunteers

3.1 ESCV employees are encouraged in the first instance to report their concerns to their line manager. If the line manager cannot deal with the matter, or it is not appropriate for the line manager to deal with it, they will refer the concern to the Chief Executive. Concerns related to the Chief Executive should be raised with the Chair of the Board of Directors.

3.2 Concerns of board members should be raised with the Chair of the Board of Directors.

3.3 Concerns of volunteers should be raised with the Engagement Manager (Volunteering).

3.4 Where an individual is not satisfied with any initial response to their concerns, they are encouraged to speak with the Chief Executive or any member of the Board of Directors whom you are comfortable in approaching.

3.5 Individuals are encouraged to raise their concerns in writing, where possible, setting out the background and history of their concerns (giving names, dates, and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for their concerns and any evidence.

3.6 We will investigate a concern even where there is no evidence other than your own account, but reasonable grounds for the concern must be demonstrated.

3.7 Individuals may wish to seek the assistance of a representative before raising the concern, including them raising the concern on their behalf. Employees, board members and volunteers may also invite a representative to be present during any meetings or interviews about the concerns they have raised.

3.8 Employees may also wish to raise their concerns first with an external body e.g. a lawyer, professional or prescribed body. A prescribed body is a body which has been officially designated to deal with malpractice.

4 Raising a concern: Services outside East Sussex Community Voice

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4.1 This policy refers only to raising concerns about East Sussex Community Voice's behaviour or practice by employees or those directly engaged in its operation.

4.2 Employees or volunteers working in other bodies or settings may seek to highlight poor practice or other concerns within their own organisation. Each should have its own whistle-blowing policy and procedure to follow, and this should by their first port-of-call.

4.3 Anyone who feels unable to do this, or feels their voice is not being heard, can speak to someone independent of their organisation. Depending on the nature of the issue, this may include:

- Local Authority (East Sussex County Council)
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations such as the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or Healthwatch England
- Relevant voluntary organisations
- Police (if a legal or crime matter)

5 Protecting individuals raising concerns

5.1 We will take appropriate action to protect any individual raising a concern they believe to be true from any harassment, victimisation, or bullying.

5.2 Any individual who raises a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their job, nor will it influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures.

5.3 All concerns will be treated confidentially if an individual requests it and their name or position will not be revealed without their permission unless required by law. If the concern cannot be resolved without revealing an individual's identity, the line manager/Chief Executive/Chair of the Board of Directors will discuss with them whether and how to proceed.

5.4 Concerns raised anonymously tend to be more challenging to investigate. The Chief Executive will decide next steps for any concerns raised anonymously, considering: the seriousness of the matter, whether the concern is justified, and whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

6 How we deal with concerns

6.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported concerns and at his/her discretion, shall advise the Chair of the Board of them.

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6.2 In certain circumstances (especially if there is a conflict of interest) the Chair of the Board, Vice Chair or a senior ESCV officer may act as the Investigating Officer.

6.3 Those raising concerns will be contacted in writing within 5 working days of the concern being raised to confirm:

- receipt of the concern
- to summarise the concern
- to confirm whether the concern will be investigated or not and if not why not
- to explain how the investigation will be undertaken
- to provide a time line for a full response.

6.4 East Sussex Community Voice will keep those raising concerns up to date with progress of any investigations and offer support, if appropriate.

6.5 The aim will be to complete an investigation with 10 working days of notification of the concern, but if this is not possible those raising the concern will be informed.

6.6 Everyone involved in the disclosure of any concerns will be notified of the outcome of any investigation in writing and any follow up action(s) to be taken.

7 Monitoring and review

7.1 The Board of ESCV has the ultimate responsibility for implementing and reviewing this policy. The Board will scrutinise our work on disclosure to ensure that we meet our legal, ethical and operational commitments.

7.2 The ESCV CEO holds the day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

7.3 We will keep a record of all disclosures that we receive. This will include:

- The number of disclosures
- The nature of the concerns
- The outcome of our investigations

All information will be stored in line with our data protection policy.

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7.4 This policy will be reviewed and updated on a two-year rolling basis by the ESCV Board.

7.5 This policy may be revised sooner if there is a change in working premises, conditions or laws directly affecting disclosure or any other aspect embedded in the document.

8 Related Policies

8.1 The following policies and procedures that are related to this policy include:

- Complaints Policy
- Volunteer Problem Solving Policy

8.2 Approval and Adoption

Author/Reviewer	Simon Kiley
Sponsor	Veronica Kirwan
Date of approval and adoption	September 2025
Date of next scheduled review	September 2027

Signature of East Sussex Community Voice CIC Board Chair

Name VANESSA TAYLOR	Vanessa Taylor
Signature V Taylor.	
Date 20. 11. 25.	

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