

## Heartfulness UK (the “Charity”)

### Whistleblowing Policy

Our policy is:

*The Charity encourages everyone (this will include charity trustees, trainers, volunteers, zonal and Heartspot coordinators and employees, if any) to raise any concerns that they may have about any suspected wrongdoing at any level within the Charity. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.*

*Any initial concern should be raised with the local zonal coordinator, or if the concern involves the zonal coordinator in any way, then the concern should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer, or the Assistant Secretary for Legal Affairs who will ensure that your concern is properly addressed. Their contact details are provided below.*

*Everyone who raises a genuine concern under this policy is entitled not to be subjected to any detriment as a result. Even if your concern proves to be unfounded you will be protected against any reprisals from your manager, the charity trustees, or your colleagues in the Charity. Making a deliberately false allegation however against the Charity or any other person connected with the Charity will be treated very seriously however and can result in your removal/dismissal from your role within the Charity by the Secretary team and/or charity trustees at their discretion if they consider it to be in the best interests of the Charity to do so. For anyone who is an employee, this will be treated as an act of gross misconduct which will usually result in dismissal.*

*If you are the subject of an allegation of wrongdoing, then you will be informed of the allegation and given every opportunity to explain the situation and put your side of the story. Disciplinary action will only be taken following a full investigation in accordance with our complaints and grievance procedure.*

#### Definition

Whistleblowing is when a worker (taken to be a charity trustee, volunteer, trainer, zonal and Heartspot coordinator or employee, if any) reports suspected wrongdoing at the Charity.

A worker can report things that aren't right, are illegal or if anyone at the Charity is neglecting their duties, including:

- Where someone's health and safety are in danger
- Damage to the environment
- A criminal offence e.g. fraud or corruption
- The Charity isn't obeying the law e.g. by failing to take out the correct insurance.
- Covering up the above wrongdoing

The Charity is fully committed to operating to the highest possible standards, both within its internal operations, governance, and in the services that it provides.

#### Protection and support for whistleblower

We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way.

However, protection does not extend to those who make false allegations maliciously.

## **Types of whistleblowing eligible for protection**

These are called 'qualifying disclosures'. They include when someone reports:

- that someone's health and safety is in danger
- damage to the environment
- a criminal offence
- that the Charity is not obeying the law (like not having the right insurance)
- that someone is covering up the above wrongdoing

## **Who is protected?**

The following people are protected:

- charity trustees
- employees, if any
- volunteers (this will include trainers, zonal and Heartspot co-ordinators)

A worker will be eligible for protection if they genuinely believe what they're reporting such wrongdoing, they report this to the correct person (see below) and the disclosure is in the public interest

## **External Disclosures**

The aim of the policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as OSCR. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect operate a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## **Whistleblowing abroad**

Workers are protected from unfair treatment even if they blow the whistle on something that happened abroad. This includes when a different country's law has been or will be broken.

## **Whistleblowing contacts:**

Whistleblowing regarding safeguarding or other wrongdoing covered under this policy can be made to one or more of the below:

Safeguarding Officer: Judith Nelson [safeguarding.equality@heartfulness.uk](mailto:safeguarding.equality@heartfulness.uk)

Secretary: Tejal Rathod [uk.secretary@heartfulness.org](mailto:uk.secretary@heartfulness.org)

Protect: (Independent Whistleblowing Charity) Helpline – 020 3117 2520 / website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk>