

Whistle-Blowing Policy for The Well

1. Introduction:

The Well is committed to being open, honest, and accountable. We actively encourage a free and open culture in all dealings between the congregation, volunteers, staff, trustees & workers. Tackling problems is vitally important to maintaining the overall health & wellbeing of the church and achieving its charitable aims. The Well Church, North Swindon is a Bishops Mission Order within the Diocese of Bristol and is under the authority of the Bishop Bristol.

This policy is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and other legislation, which protects employees and workers who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

2. Key Points

The Whistleblowing Policy sets out the framework for dealing with allegations of illegal and improper conduct. The Well is committed to the highest standards of transparency, probity, integrity, and accountability.

This policy is intended to provide a means of making serious allegations about standards, conduct, financial irregularity or possible unlawful action in a way that will ensure confidentiality and protect those making such allegations, in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so, from being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged.

3. Scope

This policy applies to everyone who works for or volunteers at The Well. This means Employees, Workers, Office Holders, Volunteers, Interns, and Contractors.

This policy does not replace other policies or procedures.

This policy applies to, but is not limited to, allegations around any of the following:

- a criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- a breach of any other legal obligation
- the unauthorised use of public funds
- possible fraud and corruption
- sexual, physical, or verbal abuse, or bullying or intimidation of employees, customers or service users
- abuse of authority



- spiritual abuse
- other unethical conduct
- concealment of any of the above

You do not need to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. You do, however, need to hold a reasonable belief of such an action having been, being or likely to be carried out.

If you feel unable to whistle blow internally, the matter may be reported directly to the relevant regulator, such as Bristol Diocese or the Charity Commission.

4. Reporting

Reporting an allegation should be made in the first instance, preferably in writing, to the Church Leader (churchleader@thewellswindon.org) or, if the concern relates to them, to the Trustees (trustees@thewellswindon.org) or Bristol Diocese christopher.bryan@bristoldiocese.org (The Archdeacon of Malmesbury)

The Well recognises that the decision to make an allegation can be a difficult one to make. However, whistleblowers who make serious allegations in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so should have nothing to fear because they are doing their duty either to the church and/or to those for whom the church or they are providing a service.

The Well will take all appropriate action to protect a whistleblower who makes a serious allegation, in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so, from any reprisals, harassment, or victimisation.

In the case of Safeguarding concerns, these should be raised with one of the following:

The Well Safeguarding Officer

Katy Tugwell safeguarding@thewellswindon.org
07931 578437

Diocese of Bristol Safeguarding

Adam Bond safeguarding@bristoldiocese.org
07543 504977

5. Confidentiality

All allegations will be treated in confidence, and every effort will be made not to reveal a whistleblower's identity unless the whistleblower otherwise requests. However, if the matter is



subsequently dealt with through other policies such as the Staff Handbook the relevant confidentiality will apply.

Similarly, if the allegation results in court proceedings, then the whistleblower may have to give evidence in open court if the case is to be successful.

The Well will not, without the whistleblower's consent, disclose the identity of a whistleblower to anyone other than a person involved in the investigation/allegation.

6. Support

The Well will take steps to minimise any difficulties which may be experienced as a result of making an allegation and look to offer appropriate support.

The Well accepts that whistleblowers need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform those making allegations of the outcome of any investigation.

7 Document Review

Reviewed and Authorised by the Well Trustees: January 2025