**Whistleblowing and Raising Concerns**

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This PCC encourages a free and open culture in its dealings between its officers, employees and all people with whom it engages. The PCC encourages an open policy which encourages employees to come forward in raising any concerns that they may have about other employees, senior members of staff or the wider Church Community.

This policy is designed to provide guidance to all those who work with or within the scope of activities authorised by The PCC who may from time to time feel that they need to raise certain issues with someone in confidence and confidentially.

The PCC recognises that effective and honest communication is essential if concerns about breaches or failures are to be effectively dealt with.

 Any person who in the public interest raises genuine concerns under this policy will not under any circumstances be subjected to any form of detriment or disadvantage as a result of having raised their concerns. The victimisation or harassment of an individual making a protected disclosure is a disciplinary offence.

 This policy applies where you reasonably believe that one of the following sets of circumstances is occurring, has occurred or may occur within the scope of activities authorised by The PCC and that your disclosure is in the public interest:

• a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.

• where an individual has failed to meet the agreed standards or fell below the expected standards required by The PCC or of the persons role.

• a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject.

• a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.

• the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered. • the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged.

• information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

It is not necessary that you prove the breach or failure that you are alleging has occurred or is likely to occur, you may simply raise a reasonable suspicion. The PCC will treat issues any issues with confidentiality. However, you should note that you will not be protected from the consequences of making such a disclosure if, by doing so, you commit a criminal offence.

Procedure

 The PCC undertakes to protect its employees from victimisation when they act as alerters. Employees who are concerned about any malpractice but unsure whether to blow the whistle or to stay silent or are unclear about how to go about blowing the whistle may obtain free expert help from the independent charity “Public Concern at Work”, Suite 306, 16 Baldwins Gardens, London, EC1N 7RJ. Telephone: 0207 404 6609.

If you are concerned about any form of malpractice covered by this policy, you should normally raise the issue with your immediate superior. If you feel you cannot tell your immediate superior, for whatever reason, you should raise the issue with the chair of The PCC or if that is not possible the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer.

A concern can be raised by telephone, in person or in writing. It is preferable if it is made in writing. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of your concern beyond doubt or provide evidence, you will generally need to provide, as a minimum, details of the nature of the concern and why you believe it to be true, and the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates where possible).

We are committed to ensuring that all disclosures raised will be dealt with appropriately, consistently, fairly and professionally. We will arrange a meeting as soon possible to discuss the concern raised. You may bring a colleague or other representative to any meeting that takes place. The companion must respect the confidentiality of the disclosure and any subsequent investigation. We may ask you for further information about the concern raised, either at this meeting or at a later stage.

 After the meeting, we will decide how to respond. Usually this will involve making internal enquiries first, but it may be necessary to carry out an investigation at a later stage which may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised. We will endeavour to complete investigations within a reasonable time.

We will keep you informed of the progress of the investigation carried out and when it is completed, and give you an indication of timings for any actions or next steps that we will take, but we cannot inform you of any matters which would infringe any duty of confidentiality owed to others.