

Whistleblowing Policy

The Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (JRRT) is committed to building an open and accountable culture in which those working for and with the Trust are able to raise concerns with someone in confidence.

This policy applies to employees, JRRT Directors and those working with the Trust, for example grantees.

Employees who, in good faith, raise genuine concerns will not be subject to detrimental treatment as a result of their disclosure.

What is whistleblowing?

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who report wrongdoing within the workplace. It applies in cases where one of the following has occurred, or is likely to occur, within the Trust:

- a. criminal offences (including fraud)
- b. failure to comply with laws
- c. miscarriages of justice
- d. health and safety breaches
- e. environmental damage
- f. covering up wrongdoing in the above categories

Reporting procedure

Allegations should be reported in writing to: Fiona Weir, CEO, Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, The Garden House, Water End, York YO30 6WQ. The CEO will investigate the allegation and report back to the whistleblower with any findings or actions, as appropriate.

If the person feels unable to raise the matter with the CEO, for whatever reason, they may raise the matter with the Chair of the Board of Directors. Similarly, if the whistleblower is dissatisfied with the response of the CEO to the allegation, they may appeal to the Chair.

It is important that relevant information is provided including:

- The name of the person making the allegation and a contact point.
- The background and history of the allegation (giving relevant dates and names of those who may have contributed to the allegation).

- The specific reason for the allegation. The person making an allegation is not expected to evidence the allegations, but there will need to be enough to establish that there is a genuine concern.

JRRT recognises that the decision to make an allegation can be difficult. JRRT will take 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.

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. If the allegation results in court proceedings, then the whistleblower may have to give evidence in open court.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages whistleblowers to put their name to an allegation wherever possible, as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate, and also so that the whistleblower can know if their disclosure has been dealt with. In exercising discretion to accept an anonymous allegation, the factors to be considered include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised;
- the credibility of the allegation; and
- whether the allegation can realistically be investigated from factors or sources other than the complainant

Untrue allegations

No disciplinary or other action will be taken against a whistleblower who makes an allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest, even if the allegation is not substantiated. However, disciplinary action may be taken against a whistleblower who makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain where there is no element of public interest.

Action on receipt of an allegation

If the allegation relates to fraud, potential fraud or other financial irregularity, the Chair of the Finance Committee will be informed within five working days of receipt of the allegation. The Chair of the Finance Committee will determine whether the allegation should be investigated and the method of investigation.

If the allegation discloses evidence of a criminal offence, it will immediately be reported to the Board of Directors who will decide whether to inform the Police.

The CEO will report any whistleblowing allegations to the Board of Directors.

Responsibility for the policy

The CEO and Chair of the Board of Directors have overall responsibility for the operation of this policy and for determining the administrative processes to be followed and the format of the records to be kept.

Status of the policy

This policy is reviewed and approved by the Board.

This policy will be made available on the Trust's website to be accessed by applicants, grantees, staff, Board members, consultants, volunteers, and partners.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Last reviewed September 2022

Next review due September 2025