



Yuva Rural Association

Whistle Blowing (Protection) Policy

Yuva Rural Association is committed to fostering a culture where General Council and Governing Council members, Director/s, staff members, volunteers and other stake holders of Yuva Rural Association acting on its behalf (together know as representatives) are encouraged to raise concerns about unethical and unacceptable conduct in a safe and protected environment.

The purpose of this policy is to strengthen Yuva Rural Association's purpose of existence and core values by powering all representatives to report any wrongful acts in good faith. This policy is intended to provide reporting mechanisms and the means through which all representatives regardless of their office location, position are able to report alleged or suspected wrongful acts.

The Secretary of Yuva Rural Association is to ensure that all representatives are made aware of this policy, who to report, concerns to and any amendments to it.

Preamble/Rational

- Any representative of Yuva Rural Association may anytime realize that there may be something seriously wrong within the organization. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organization. They may also fear harassment or victimization. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice,
- The organization is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment, Yuva Rural Association, expects all representatives of Yuva Rural Association, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the organization's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognized that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- The policy document makes it clear that one can do so without fear of victimization, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This whistle-blowing (protection) policy is intended to encourage and enable the representatives to raise serious concerns within the organization rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.
- The policy applies to all staff members and those stakeholders working for organization and within the organization premises, for example, consultant etc. (together called representatives of Yuva Rural Association) It also covers regular suppliers and vendors providing services regularly under a contract with the organization in their own premises.

- These procedures are in addition to organization's Complaint/ Grievance procedures and other statutory reporting procedures. We are responsible for making service users aware of the existence of these procedures.

Definitions

1. Whistleblowing is defined as deliberate, voluntary disclosure of individual or organizational wrongdoing by a person who has access to data, events or information about an actual, suspected or anticipated wrongdoing within the organization.
2. Whistleblower refers to any Representative who attempt to make or wish to make a report in connection with a wrongful act under this policy and who wish to avail themselves of the protections offered by this policy.

A wrongful act includes, but not limited to:

- Breaches of legal obligations (including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law);
- Criminal offenses;
- Mismanagement of funds;
- Actual or suspected fraud;
- Abuse of authority;
- Disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- Health and safety risks,
- Risks to the public as well as other employees;
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorized use of organizational funds;
- Possible fraud and corruption;
- Sexual or physical abuse of clients;
- Other unethical conduct; or
- The concealment of any of the above

Aims and Scope of this Policy

This policy aims to:

- Encourage representatives to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- Provide avenues for representatives to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- Ensure that representative receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied

- Reassure the representative/s that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimization if they have a reasonable belief that they have made any disclosure in good faith.

Thus, any serious concerns that any representative r have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of officers or employees of Organization or others acting on behalf of the management can be reported under the whistle-blowing (protection) policy. This may be about something that:

- Makes someone feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards,
- Is against the organization's Standing Orders and policies; or
- Falls below established standards of practice; or
- Amounts to improper conduct.
- Falls against the core values of the organization
- Spoils organization's image

This policy does not replace the organization's other complaints/ grievance procedure.

Safeguards

Harassment or Victimization

- The organization is committed to good practice/s and high standards and wants to be supportive of representatives.
- We as an organization recognize that the decision to report concern can be a difficult. If the whistle blower is saying is true, she/he should have nothing to fear because they will be doing their duty to the organization and for those whom they are providing the service.
- The organization will not tolerate any harassment or victimization (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect the whistle blower when she/he raise a concern in good faith.
- Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect the representative.

Confidentiality

- All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity. However, at the appropriate time, they may need to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous Allegations

- This policy encourages representatives to put their name to their allegation whenever possible.

- Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Council.
- In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:
 - a) The seriousness of the issues raised
 - b) The credibility of the concern; and
 - c) The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

How to raise a concern?

- As a first step, the member should normally raise concerns with his immediate coordinator / their superior/line manager or the HR. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice.
- Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. The representative who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:
 - a) The background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
 - b) The reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.
- The earlier they express the concern the easier it is to take action.
- Although representative is not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, he will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for his concern.
- The representative may wish to consider discussing his concern with a colleague first and he may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of representatives who have had the same experience or concerns.

How would the organization respond?

- The organization will respond to the concerns raised. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.
 - Where appropriate, the matters raised may:
 - Be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process
 - Be referred to the police
 - Be referred to the external auditor
 - Form the subject of an independent inquiry.
- In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial inquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle, which the organization will have in mind, is the public interest.
- Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the responsible person will write to representative :

- Acknowledging that the concern has been received
- Indicating how we propose to deal with the matter
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
- Telling whether any initial inquiries have been made
- Supplying a complainant with information on staff support mechanisms, and
- Telling a complainant whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

- **False allegations**

Any allegations not made in 'good faith' or found to be false or malicious, will be treated as a disciplinary offense and will be investigated in accordance with extant procedures

- **Prevention of reporting**

If some person tries to prevent an individual from making a confidential report or victimizes that person for raising their concerns, Yuva Rural Association will take this to be a serious disciplinary misdemeanor and this instance will be investigated in accordance with extant policies.

- **Anonymous reporting**

Anonymous reporting is not to be encouraged, but this is likely to occur from time to time. In all such cases, while not taking formal cognizance of such reporting. Management may choose to ascertain all the verifiable facts mentioned in such reporting. If facts verified are found to sustain the allegation, formal proceedings may be initiated.

Responsible Officer

The Director General has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. There will be a Council consisting of Director General as convener, Secretary of Yuva Rural Association and Chief of Operation/ HR Manager. One member of this council will be a woman. The Director General and/or the Council will maintain the records of concerns raised and the outcome and will report as necessary to the Governing Council/ General Council of Yuva Rural Association.