

# KENT SHARED LIVES

## Policies & Procedures

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### (35) Whistle Blowing

It is the policy of Kent Shared Lives to ensure that its employees/ workers/ Shared Lives hosts, and placed individuals feel confident that they can raise concerns regarding any aspect of the organisation and the services that it provides without fear of negative consequences.

The policy should be read alongside Shared Lives confidentiality policy and complaints procedure.

1. This policy concerns the reporting; by an employee/Shared Lives worker/Shared Lives host/placed individual, of malpractices within Shared Lives and the protection to which such individuals are entitled.
2. 'Malpractice' may involve a criminal offence, failure to comply with a legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety, damage to the environment and deliberate suppression of information regarding these issues.  
Of particular relevance and importance to Shared Lives operation, *'malpractice' may include all forms of harassment, bullying, sexual, physical, emotional abuse or other forms of harm or loss to individual placed, Shared Lives hosts and Shared Lives workers.*
3. Shared Lives recognises that individuals may be reluctant to express concerns because of misplaced loyalty or fear of victimisation and is committed to ensuring that its employees/workers/Shared Lives hosts/individuals feel able to do so regarding any aspect of the organisation and the services that it provides, as long as these are first raised through the appropriate internal channels.
4. Shared Lives regards any pressure or harassment of those who express concerns in good faith as totally unacceptable and will take necessary steps to prevent or address this.
5. Such disclosures are protected by the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) and early reporting of matters will alert management and may prevent injury, loss of life, cost and damage to the reputation of the Shared Lives.
6. All concerns communicated to Shared Lives will be treated in strictest confidence and in accordance with Shared Lives confidentiality policy, subject to necessary resolution of matters and every effort will be made to protect the identity of the person expressing them. It is recognised that in certain instances subsequent referral to an outside body may be necessary.

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### **Procedure**

An employee/Shared Lives worker/Shared Lives host/placed individual who has a concern about any aspect of the organisation or the services that it provides should follow the following procedure:

#### Informal procedure

1. Many incidents of perceived malpractice can be dealt with in an informal way. The individual with the concern may not understand all aspects of the situation and it may simply be enough to discuss the matter with a manager who has all the information.
2. The individual, should in the first instance, contact their line manager or Shared Lives worker to voice their concern. If the concern is about the line manager or the Shared Lives worker, then he/she should contact the Shared Lives manager. The manager will attempt to resolve the concern promptly. However, if the concern cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of the individual then he/she should feel free to use the formal procedure.

#### Formal procedure

1. The formal procedure is designed to ensure a swift and effective response to a formal expression of concern from an employee/Shared Lives worker/Shared Lives host/individual about the operation or services of the organisation with a minimum of distress to all parties. It is a separate process to the grievance procedure, which is designed to address more personal issues.
2. An individual who wishes to pursue the formal approach should register his/her concerns in writing, giving as much detail (e.g. time, date, persons involved) as possible. The letter should normally be addressed to the line manager or Shared Lives worker. If, however, the matter relates to that person, it should be addressed to the Shared Lives manager.
3. Shared Lives will treat the letter as a formal complaint and will respond as indicated in the Shared Lives complaints procedure and according to the findings of any investigation.