

## The Lordsbridge Team of Churches Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

The Lordsbridge Team of Churches (hereafter “the Lordsbridge Team”) is committed to the highest possible standards of integrity and recognises that clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners are often the first to become aware of or identify serious concerns. When such concerns arise, barriers to coming forward could be in relation to misplaced loyalty or fear of harassment or victimisation.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the “Act”) protects workers who raise concerns from victimisation or harassment. In accordance with the Act, the Lordsbridge Team welcomes staff members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Team’s work to come forward and voice those concerns, in confidence within the Lordsbridge Team.

The Lordsbridge Team relies heavily upon the contribution of volunteers and recognises that they are in an important position to recognise and report concerns. Whilst voluntary roles are not included within the Act, the Lordsbridge Team encourages volunteers and parishioners to use this process with the relevant principles of protection applied to them.

This policy is in place to ensure that an internal process is available to encourage and enable workers, volunteers and parishioners to raise serious concerns in confidence and without fear of reprisals, to ensure that the Lordsbridge Team continues to provide the highest standards of integrity and accountability.

### Principles

The policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

All clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners have the right to raise concerns about perceived unacceptable practice or behaviour.

All clergy and lay staff are responsible for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour, safeguarding concerns and any health and safety risks. We also invite volunteers and parishioners to raise these matters.

The Lordsbridge Team does not tolerate victimisation or harassment and will take action to protect clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners when they raise a concern in good faith.

The Lordsbridge Team will endeavour to protect the identity of any individual who raises a whistleblowing concern and wishes to remain anonymous. However, in certain circumstances, such as any inquiry arising from the concern, the individual may be required to provide a signed statement. In certain circumstances the Lordsbridge Team may have to disclose the identity of the individual without their consent, for example where there is risk to other involved. The reasons for this will be discussed with the individual.

Clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners who raise concerns will be given appropriate advice and support and kept informed in relation to the progress and outcome of any inquiries.

Any malicious or vexatious allegations made by clergy or lay staff may lead to a disciplinary process for the individual concerned.

## **How to raise a concern**

The Lordsbridge Team recognises the difficulties in raising a concern. However, raising a concern at an early stage may protect others, prevent the problem getting worse, and prevent other individuals becoming implicated.

Clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners are encouraged to raise concerns in cases where:

- the law may have been broken
- Team policies and procedures may have been breached
- there are concerns of a safeguarding nature

### ***Special Note: Safeguarding***

*The Lordsbridge Team is committed to safeguarding the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk of harm. Concerns about the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm should be raised without delay to prevent any ongoing risk of harm.*

If the individual who has a concern does not feel confident to report the matter within the Lordsbridge Team they are encouraged to refer directly to their relevant Local Authority or Constabulary or the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

## **Who to tell**

Clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners should raise concerns initially with their Team Vicar, line-manager, volunteer co-ordinator or with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, Team Rector, Rural Dean, Archdeacon or Bishop.

This will be dependent upon the nature of the concerns and who might be involved.

Alternatively, a concern may be raised with:

Paul Evans - Diocesan Secretary - 01353 652702 or 07837707516

[paul.evans@elydiocese.org](mailto:paul.evans@elydiocese.org)

Rebecca Boswell - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser 01353 652731 or 07904 487912

[rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org](mailto:rebecca.boswell@elydiocese.org)

A person raising a concern can call, write to, or arrange to meet with either of the above. In the case of a meeting the individual raising the concern may wish to invite a supporter.

Written concerns should:

- identify that it is a whistleblowing disclosure;
- detail the background and history of the concerns;
- give names, dates and places (where possible); and
- note the reasons why the individual is particularly concerned about the situation.

## **What could happen**

This will be dependent upon the nature of the concern. The matter may be:

- investigated internally
- referred to the Police and/or other statutory agencies
- independently investigated

- referred for consideration under the Clergy Discipline Measure; or
- a combination of the above

### **Anonymous Allegations**

The Lordsbridge Team encourages clergy, lay staff, volunteers and parishioners to identify themselves when reporting a concern. However, any anonymous concerns will be investigated as far as reasonably possible based upon the information provided.

Or contact:

**Cambridgeshire Police** - dial 101 or in an emergency dial 999

**Cambridgeshire Children's Services** - Tel: 0345 045 5203 (Cambridgeshire)

**Cambridgeshire Adult Services** - Tel: 0345 045 5202 (Cambridgeshire)

**Emergency Out of hours (Cambridgeshire Children and Adults)** - Tel: 01733 234724

Independent, free, expert help and advice in relation to whistleblowing is also available from **Protect** <https://protect-advice.org.uk/> Contact: Tel: 0207 3117 2520; [whistle@protect-advice.org.uk](mailto:whistle@protect-advice.org.uk)