

Whistleblowing Policy (Housing)

Policy Name:	Whistleblowing Policy (Housing)
Version:	V.1
Approved by:	<i>The Board of Management and Trustees</i>
Approved date:	<i>17th November 2025</i>
Next review date:	<i>17th November 2026</i>
Key Legislation and Regulations:	Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) Care Act 2014 Charities Act 2011 Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Oakfield aligns with guidance from the Charity Commission, CQC, and Regulator of Social Housing, ensuring that whistleblowing is embedded in our governance and safeguarding culture.
Relevant Policies	Safeguarding Risk Management Staff Training Complaints Policy EDI
EA:	Equality Analysis is currently under review
DPIA:	DPIA is currently under review
Consultation:	Board of Trustees
Applies to:	All Tenants, employees and volunteers

1. Policy Statement

Oakfield (Easton Maudit) Ltd is committed to operating with integrity, transparency, and accountability. We encourage a culture where concerns about wrongdoing can be raised without fear, and where whistleblowers are protected and respected.

This policy ensures that anyone working with or connected to Oakfield, whether staff, volunteers, trustees, or contractors—can report serious concerns in confidence, knowing they will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Enable individuals to raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice
- Ensure concerns are investigated fairly and promptly
- Protect whistleblowers from victimisation or retaliation
- Promote a culture of openness and ethical conduct

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Oakfield staff (permanent, temporary, agency)
- Volunteers and trustees
- Contractors and service providers
- Anyone working on behalf of or in partnership with Oakfield

It covers concerns relating to:

- Criminal offences or unlawful activity
- Safeguarding failures or abuse
- Health and safety risks
- Financial mismanagement or fraud
- Breaches of legal or regulatory obligations
- Misconduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

4. What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting serious concerns about wrongdoing that is in the public interest. It is not the same as a grievance, which relates to personal employment matters.

Examples of whistleblowing include:

- A staff member witnessing abuse of a vulnerable adult
- A trustee discovering financial irregularities
- A volunteer observing unsafe working conditions
- A contractor being pressured to ignore legal requirements

5. Reporting Procedure

Oakfield provides multiple safe routes for whistleblowing:

1. Internal Reporting

- Concerns should be raised with the Whistleblowing Officer (The Managing Director or Registered Manager)
- If the concern involves senior management, it may be raised directly with the Chair of Trustees

2. External Reporting

- If internal reporting is not appropriate or effective, concerns may be raised with:
 - Charity Commission
 - Care Quality Commission (CQC)
 - Regulator of Social Housing
 - Local Authority Safeguarding Team
 - Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

3. Anonymous Reporting

- Oakfield accepts anonymous disclosures, although investigation may be limited without further information

6. Protection and Confidentiality

Oakfield guarantees:

- Confidential handling of all whistleblowing reports
- Protection from retaliation or victimisation for whistleblowers
- Support and guidance throughout the process

Any attempt to intimidate or retaliate against a whistleblower will be treated as misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

7. Investigation and Outcome

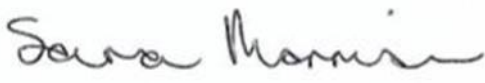
- All concerns will be acknowledged within 5 working days
- Investigations will be conducted promptly and fairly
- Outcomes may include disciplinary action, policy changes, or external reporting
- The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, where appropriate and lawful

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Whistleblowing Officer/Managing Director	Receives and investigates concerns, maintains records, liaises with external bodies
Chair of Trustees	Oversees whistleblowing governance, receives escalated concerns
Staff, Volunteers, Trustees	Raise concerns responsibly, cooperate with investigations
Contractors	Comply with Oakfield's whistleblowing standards while on site

9. Monitoring and Review

- Whistleblowing reports are reviewed regularly by the Managing Director
- The Board receives anonymised summaries of concerns and outcomes
- This policy is reviewed annually or following significant incidents or legislative changes

Signed - Chair of Trustees:	
Print:	Mrs Sara Morrison
Date:	17 th November 2025