



The Anthony Seddon Fund
Supporting mental wellbeing in our community

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Title:	Freedom to Speak Up & Whistleblowing Policy
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Scope:	
This policy applies to all trustees, staff, volunteers, and connected individuals of The Anthony Seddon Fund .	
Purpose:	
The purpose of this policy is to describe how the charity will support staff in speaking up in the event of wrongdoing or suspected wrongdoing by outlining a clear process for doing so.	
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HR-PP-CE-01 – Freedom to Speak Up & Whistleblowing Policy – V4	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No substantive changes required.• Updated document reference to reflect revised naming convention.• Updated Section 12 – Review to reflect the charity’s new tiered policy review cycle.	
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1. Introduction

We are committed to creating an open, honest, and transparent charity where staff feel able to speak up and are valued for doing so. It is important that any criminal behaviour or other wrongdoing by a trustee, staff member, volunteer, or any individual undertaking work with or on behalf of The Anthony Seddon Fund be reported, investigated, and properly dealt with.

The **Whistleblowing Policy** is underpinned by the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998** (known as the Whistleblowers Act). This gives legal protection to trustees, staff, and volunteers against being removed from or penalised by the charity as a result of their publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.

2. Purpose

This policy is intended to cover concerns that are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but then might lead to the implementation of other policies and procedures, e.g., safeguarding. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Financial malpractice, impropriety, or fraud.
- Failure to comply with legal obligations or statutes.
- Dangers to Health and Safety or the environment.
- Criminal activity.
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour.
- Attempts to conceal any of the above.

This policy is not intended for people with concerns about their employment that only affect them, but for overall concerns that may affect the entire charity. At some point, all of us may have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually, these can be easily resolved, but when the concern feels serious, it can be difficult to know what to do. **If in doubt, please speak up.** This will help us try to prevent anything serious from occurring, such as a possible danger, professional misconduct, etc., that may affect our customers and the support that we provide.

This policy is intended to reassure you that it is safe and acceptable to speak up, and to enable you to do so at an early stage and in the right way. The Anthony Seddon Fund welcomes genuine concerns and is committed to dealing with them professionally. We need to ensure we can deliver a safe and effective service for our customers.

3. Public Interest Disclosure Act

The **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998** (PIDA) provides legal protection for employees who raise an issue or make what is known as a "**protected disclosure**"

which, in the reasonable belief of the member of staff, refers to one or more of the following:

- That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed.
- That a person failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject.
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.
- That the health and safety of an individual have been, may have been, or are likely to be endangered; and/or
- That the environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged.
- Deliberate concealment of information regarding any of the above.

PIDA applies to all workers, including those on temporary contracts, agency staff, and paid trainees and apprentices. It does not cover volunteers.

There are very specific criteria that need to be met for individuals to be covered by the whistleblowing law when they raise a concern and be able to claim the protection that accompanies it. Those who speak up are protected from detriment by the legislation and this policy; you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of reprisal as a result, and anyone responsible for such a detriment will be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The Anthony Seddon Fund will treat all disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the person making the allegation may be kept confidential as long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of information, and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

5. Speaking Up/Reporting Channels

Who Should I Speak Up To?

If you, as a trustee, staff member, or volunteer, have a concern, your first point of contact should be the **General Manager**. You can approach them either verbally or in writing. Contact details: benjames@tasfund.org.uk or 0161 376 4439.

Should you feel uncomfortable approaching the General Manager, perhaps due to their involvement in the matter, your next point of contact should be either the Chief Operating Officer, Trustee or the Chairperson of The Anthony Seddon Fund. Contact details for these individuals are as follows: 0161 376 4439 / harry@tasfund.org.uk.

In the rare case where your concern involves the Chairperson, we recommend seeking independent external advice. Information on relevant external advisory services.

The National Whistleblowing Helpline

Offers advice to employees on how to raise concerns, as well as advice to employers on good policy and governance arrangements. For free, independent, and confidential advice, call **08000 724 725** or email enquiries@wbhelpline.org.uk.

How Should I Speak Up?

You have several options for raising your concerns. These include:

- In-person meetings.
- Phone.
- Written communication: You can send an email or a letter.

When raising a concern, please provide as much detail as possible about the issue, including any specific incidents or evidence. This will help us effectively address and resolve the matter.

6. What We Will Do / Investigations

Response to Concerns

Upon receiving a concern, we commit to actively listening, learning, and improving our services. We will record your concern, ensuring to note the date of receipt, your request for confidentiality (if any), a summary of the issue, and dates for updates or feedback. An acknowledgment will be sent to you within seven working days of receiving your concern.

Investigation Process

Concerns raised will be addressed through a thorough investigation, conducted by either members of the Trustee Board or an independent party, to ensure fairness and objectivity. The timeframe for the investigation will be communicated to you, aiming to reach a conclusion as swiftly as possible. The focus of the investigation will be to uncover facts, identify solutions, and implement preventive measures for future occurrences.

External Reporting

We encourage trustees, staff, and volunteers to utilise our internal procedures fully. However, if necessary, external bodies can be contacted. These include the Health and Safety Executive and the Charities Commission (Helpline: 0300 066 9197). Prior to external reporting, we suggest consulting relevant guidelines and procedures available on their respective websites.

7. Communications

In recognising the value of your concerns, we commit to treating you with the utmost respect and gratitude throughout this process. Our first step will be to discuss the concern with you, ensuring we have a clear understanding of the issues you've raised.

Within 20 working days, we will provide an initial plan of action. This plan will outline the expected duration of the investigation and how we intend to proceed. Regular updates will be provided to keep you informed about the investigation's progress.

Upon conclusion, we aim to share the findings with you, respecting the confidentiality of all parties involved. Our goal is to maintain transparency while protecting the privacy of everyone concerned.

8. Training and Awareness

Emphasising the Importance of Speaking Up

We are committed to fostering a culture where speaking up about concerns is valued and encouraged. To support this, we will provide regular training sessions for all trustees, staff, and volunteers. These sessions will focus on:

- Understanding the Freedom to Speak Up & Whistleblowing Policy.
- Recognising situations that may require speaking up.
- The process and importance of raising concerns.

Continuous Learning and Improvement

Our training will be interactive, allowing for questions and discussions to ensure a deep understanding of the policy. We will regularly review and update our training materials to reflect any changes in legislation or best practices.

Promoting a Supportive Environment

We will also conduct awareness campaigns throughout the year to keep the principles of this policy at the forefront of everyone's mind. These campaigns will include informational materials, reminders in regular communications, and opportunities for feedback on the policy and training.

9. Feedback Mechanisms

Continuous Improvement Through Feedback

Our approach to feedback is centred on enhancing the services we provide. Following an investigation, we will actively track and implement the identified improvements, ensuring they effectively address the issues raised. This process is not just about making changes but also about verifying their impact.

Sharing Lessons Learned

We believe in the power of collective learning. Insights gained from investigations will be shared across different teams within the charity, and more broadly, if applicable, to foster a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility. This collaborative approach ensures that the lessons learned benefit the entire organisation and contribute to our ongoing commitment to excellence and transparency.

10. Protection Measures

The Anthony Seddon Fund is dedicated to protecting individuals who raise concerns from any form of retaliation or harm. We understand the importance of ensuring a safe environment for speaking up and are committed to:

- **Non-Retaliation Policy:** We strictly prohibit any retaliation against individuals who raise concerns in good faith. This includes protection from harassment, bullying, discrimination, or adverse employment consequences.
- **Confidentiality:** Every effort will be made to protect the whistleblower's identity and the information they provide, subject to legal obligations.
- **Monitoring and Enforcement:** We will monitor the treatment of individuals who have raised concerns to ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing within the organisation.
- **Legal Protections:** We will inform and educate our staff and volunteers about the legal protections in place for whistleblowers under relevant legislation.

11. Support

At The Anthony Seddon Fund, we recognise the emotional challenges involved in speaking up. Our support framework includes:

- **Wellbeing Support:** Our **Wellbeing Toolkit (HR-PP-HR-03)** offers resources and strategies for managing stress and maintaining mental health during challenging times.
- **Guidance and Advice:** Detailed guidance on the whistleblowing process is provided, ensuring clarity and support throughout.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with The Anthony Seddon Fund's policy review cycle, which operates on a tiered system based on risk, relevance, and compliance need:

- **Tier 1** – Annual review (compliance-critical policies)

- **Tier 2** – Review every two years (operational or people-focused policies)
- **Tier 3** – Review every three years (low-risk or informational policies)

In addition to the scheduled cycle, this policy may also be reviewed earlier if:

- There are significant changes in legislation or best practice.
- Internal monitoring, feedback, or incidents indicate a review is necessary.
- Structural or operational changes within the charity affect its relevance or application.

Whether or not there were substantive changes, the version control section will display the date of the most recent review.