



YOUNG SOMERSET | BOARD POLICY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

2026 edition

POLICY OWNER Board of Trustees / Senior Leadership Team

APPROVED BY Board of Trustees

Signed by David Elstone Chair of Trustees


14 October 2026

APPROVAL DATE

EFFECTIVE DATE

REVIEW DATE

VERSION / STATUS 1.0 / Approved

Linked procedure: Whistleblowing Procedure. Operational detail is maintained outside this Board-approved policy.

1. Purpose

To ensure that people working for or with Young Somerset can raise concerns about suspected wrongdoing in the public interest safely and confidently, and that concerns are handled fairly, proportionately and without retaliation. The policy supports safeguarding, accountability, legal compliance and organisational learning while protecting the rights of people who raise concerns and those who are the subject of allegations.

2. Scope

This policy applies internally to employees, workers, agency workers, apprentices, volunteers, trustees, contractors, consultants, sessional workers, secondees and people providing services on Young Somerset's behalf. Former workers may use it for concerns arising from information obtained through work. Statutory protection depends on the categories defined in law; Young Somerset will nevertheless apply its non-retaliation principles to everyone raising a genuine concern.

It is not normally the route for purely personal employment complaints, routine service-user complaints, or matters better addressed through grievance, complaints, safeguarding, disciplinary, data protection or health and safety processes. The same facts may engage more than one process.

3. Policy statement

Young Somerset is committed to honesty, openness, accountability and safeguarding. Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing in the public interest. Young Somerset will focus on the substance and risk of information raised, take concerns seriously, preserve confidentiality as far as reasonably possible and protect people from retaliation for raising concerns.

- No person is required to prove an allegation before raising a concern; the relevant legal test is based on reasonable belief and public interest.
- Whistleblowing must not replace or delay immediate safeguarding, emergency, criminal, regulatory or other statutory action.
- People who are the subject of allegations will be treated fairly and no disciplinary finding will be made solely because an allegation has been raised.

4. Policy commitments

Young Somerset will:

- provide accessible routes for raising and escalating concerns, including anonymous concerns;
- assess concerns promptly, objectively and proportionately and manage conflicts of interest;
- not tolerate dismissal, threats, bullying, harassment, exclusion, loss of opportunity or other detriment because a person has raised a protected disclosure or assisted an investigation;
- protect confidentiality where requested and reasonably possible, while being clear that information may need to be shared for investigation, safeguarding, legal or regulatory reasons;
- ensure confidentiality or non-disclosure clauses do not prevent lawful protected disclosures or reports to the police;
- consider organisational learning through Reflect, Learn and Share only after immediate safety, legal, regulatory and investigative requirements have been addressed; and

- maintain proportionate records and provide anonymised governance assurance without unnecessarily identifying whistleblowers.

• 5. Roles and accountability

Accountability	What belongs in the policy
Board of Trustees	Approves the policy, has overall responsibility and receives proportionate anonymised assurance.
Chief Executive / SLT	Ensures the policy and procedure are implemented, accessible, resourced and monitored.
Policy Owner	Maintains the linked procedure, guidance, training and assurance evidence.
Managers	Recognise potential whistleblowing concerns, apply the policy consistently and escalate appropriately.
Workers and volunteers	Understand the policy, raise concerns promptly and follow the linked procedure where applicable.

6. Assurance, exceptions and review

The Board will receive proportionate, anonymised assurance about themes, timeliness, outcomes, retaliation concerns and learning. The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following relevant changes in legislation, statutory guidance, Charity Commission expectations, safeguarding arrangements or organisational structure.

- Assurance owner: Senior Leadership Team.
- Reporting route and frequency: Board of Trustees, at least annually and sooner where a material issue requires assurance.
- Measures/evidence: themes, timeliness, outcomes, retaliation concerns, learning and implementation of required actions.
- Exceptions: no procedural exception may reduce statutory protection, delay safeguarding or legal duties, or alter the policy intent without Board review.

7. Related documents

Accountability	What belongs in the policy
LINKED PROCEDURE	Whistleblowing Procedure

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	Reflect, Learn and Share Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Complaints Policy; Grievance Procedure; Disciplinary Procedure; Code of Conduct; Data Protection Policy; relevant serious incident reporting procedure.
RELEVANT LAW / STANDARDS	Employment Rights Act 1996 Part IVA; Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998; Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013; Employment Rights Act 2025; current DBT, Acas, GOV.UK and Charity Commission whistleblowing guidance.

8. Version control

Accountability	What belongs in the policy
Version 1.0	Approved September 2026; review due September 2027. Separated policy intent and governance from the operational Whistleblowing Procedure.