



Audacious Church

WHISTLEBLOWERS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

We hope there is not a need for Whistleblowing and work hard to maintain high standards of care and working. However we understand that there is always room to improve and we do not always get it right. We are committed to building an environment of learning, growing and a safe community for those who attend, volunteer and work for !Audacious Church.

We recognise the importance of whistleblowers in exposing any malpractice or dangerous conduct and believe that in doing this we are able to create positive actions that are beneficial in the long term to !Audacious church as an organisation and the staff and volunteers we work with. When working with a Whistleblower we will endeavour to work together with them to form a solution and learn from the incident. This is an opportunity for growth and improvement and a chance for us to evaluate process and policy.

If someone wishes to blow the whistle you may raise it with their line manager or team leader in the first instance. If this is not appropriate due to the nature it may be raised with the Operations Director. We will endeavour to respond to you within 5 working days. If you would like this to be confidential please request that this is the case immediately.

2. DEFINITIONS

Whistleblower: An internal or external disclosure of malpractice. This includes reporting one of the following:

- A criminal offence e.g. fraud
- HSE concern
- Compliance failure
- Risk of or Environmental Damage
- Miscarriage of justice
- Covering up a wrongdoing
- Or a concealment of any of the above

It is not essential that a whistleblower comes forward with complete proof however they must hold reasonable belief that one of the above has taken place or is likely to take place.

Resolution: An agreed course of action between two or more parties that allows an optimum outcome after a series of investigations and conversations.

3. LEGISLATION

Audacious Church are committed to maintaining high levels of confidentiality as per our Confidentiality policy. All complaints will be treated as confidential and with sensitivity. Information will only be communicated to relevant staff members and volunteers. Information is stored in secure google drives and shared only with relevant parties.

Audacious Church acknowledges that whistleblowers have the right to anonymity if they request it and commit to making every effort to protect the whistleblowers identity in such cases. We do however acknowledge that anonymous whistleblowers may mean that the incident is not able to be investigated as thoroughly as we cannot gather further information and they cannot be informed of the outcome of the incident or situation.

A disclosure made to the press and not formally processed will not be considered reasonable and may be considered to be misconduct resulting in disciplinary action.

Data Protection and GDPR regulations are adhered to. Information is stored as per the Audacious Church data protection policy.

4. STANDARDS OF CARE

Audacious Church is committed to a high standard of care.

When handling a whistleblower we are committed to:

- Provide a disclosure/complaint procedure that is easily accessible, easy to follow and understand
- Acknowledging a disclosure / complaint within 5 working days and responding within 20 working days
- Clearly communicating at each stage of the resolution process
- Constructive and encouraging conversations that allow for change and learning
- To resolve complaints in a timely fashion and in the process aim to rebuild any trust or relationship lost
- Respecting our Staff, Volunteers, attendees and their experiences.

Audacious Church recognises that a whistleblower is protected by law and cannot lose their job or be treated unfairly, because they 'blew the whistle'. We commit to creating a safe space for these people.

Audacious Church will not deal with all complaints in the same nature as whistleblowing. This could include but is not limited to - A child protection or safeguarding concern, a grievance, bullying or harassment.

5. RESOLVING WHISTLEBLOWING

If someone wishes to raise a complaint / concern you may raise it with your line manager or team leader in the first instance. If this is not appropriate due to the nature it may be raised with the Operations Director. The best format for this is to mail: whistleblow@audaciouschurch.com or write to Operations Director, !Audacious Church, Unit 6 Deva Centre, Trinity way, Manchester, M3 7BB or call +(44) 0161 830 7000

We will endeavour to respond to you within 5 working days. If you would like this to be confidential please request that this is the case immediately.

You should raise your concern as soon as possible. this makes it easier to act and enable any problem to be resolved or reported quickly.

You may make your disclosure orally but a written disclosure is preferable as this make the process more efficient. In your disclosure you should include as much detail as possible and give the reasons for your concern.

1. Information Collecting

All relevant information will be collected from the Whistleblower, the situation or activities will be thoroughly investigated. This step will be completed by a neutral party with no bias wherever possible.

2. Initial Review with Operations Director

An initial review will be completed by the Operations Director. They will investigate all information and work with all concerned parties to form a resolution and agree next steps.

3. Senior Team Review

If a resolution is not reached after an initial review or the whistleblower is unhappy with the results a senior team review can be requested.

A member of the senior team will further review the information, discussing this with the initial reviewer and those involved. They will meet face to face (where possible) with the whistleblower and endeavour to resolve the complaint.

4. Trustee Review

If a resolution is not reached after the Senior Team review or the whistleblower is unhappy with the results a Trustee review can be requested.

A member of the board of Trustees will further review the information, discuss this with the Senior team and those involved. They will meet face to face with the whistleblower and endeavour to resolve the complaint.

5. External Body Review -

If after the Trustee Review is completed and a resolution has still not been formed you may request the information is reviewed by an independent external body for example the Assemblies of God (GB) or the Charity Commission

6. SUMMARY

This Whistleblowers policy is written to help resolve any issues of Complaine, Miscarriage of justice, wrongdoing or criminal offences by !Audacious Church and create space for constructive conversation, resolution and positive change.

This demonstrated a clear process and due diligence taken to ensure Whistleblowers are listened to, incidents are investigated and resolved where possible. With the best outcome for those involved.

REVIEW

This policy is reviewed annually and updated as required.

Adopted on: 26th March 2021

Signed: Stuart Keir [Trustee/Director]

Date for review: March 2022

<0.0> APPENDICES

<DOCUMENTS USED TO SUPPORT POLICY PROCEDURES SHOULD BE INCLUDED>