



## **FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy is intended as a workplace guide for managers and colleagues and covers all aspects of raising concerns and whistleblowing.

- Speaking up about any concern you have at work is important. In fact, it is vital because it will help us to keep improving our services for our clients and employees.
- You may feel worried about raising a concern, we understand this, and we are committed to an open and honest culture.
- We encourage you to share information about any errors and failings in the provision of support to you and your colleagues at work.
- The aim is to learn and improve the experiences of clients, their families, and our employees.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**What is whistleblowing?** Please refer to our Whistleblowing Policy.

### **SCOPE**

This policy is applicable to all Bridge Case Management employees.

This policy should be used where colleagues want to discuss issues they are concerned about. For example, but not restricted to:

- (a) Unsafe patient care
- (b) Unsafe working conditions
- (c) Inadequate induction or training to undertake their role
- (d) Lack of, or poor response to a reported patient safety incident
- (e) Suspicions of fraud
- (f) A bullying/harassing culture (across a team or organisation rather than individual instances of bullying)

This policy should be used where colleagues want to raise a concern that falls under a Public Interest Disclosure (See Section 3) and involves raising a concern (whistleblowing) that a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed:

- That a person has 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 has, may have been or is likely to be endangered and/ or
- That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged.
- Deliberate concealing of information about any of the above.

It's not uncommon for colleagues not to be clear on how to explain what their concern is about; they just know that they feel uncomfortable about a certain situation.

#### **PROCESS**

- We hope you feel comfortable raising your concern openly, but we also appreciate you may not want to do this.
- We would prefer you to raise any concerns anonymously rather than not at all. If there is any hesitation about speaking up about a concern, please discuss directly with your Line Manager and/or the Executive Team.

#### **WHO SHOULD I RAISE MY CONCERN WITH?**

Please raise your concerns in the first instance with your line manager to ensure all concerns are dealt with promptly. If employees feel unable to do this or would prefer not to, you can raise concerns by contacting Julie Gardner, Chief Operating Officer and/or Liz Haunch and Sue Ford, Clinical Directors.

#### **LINE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES**

On receipt of a whistleblowing complaint irrespective of the source, consideration should be given as to the best person to investigate it.

- (a) Within 3 days an Investigation Officer should be appointed.
- (b) All investigations should be concluded within 21 working days where possible and an outcome delivered to the person raising the concern with a copy sent to [Julie.gardner@bridgecm.co.uk](mailto:Julie.gardner@bridgecm.co.uk)

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

- On receipt of any concern, the Chief Operating Officer will record it in the risk management log.
- If a suitable resolution can be achieved, this will be discussed with you.
- For more complex matters where an investigation is required, an Investigation Officer will be appointed.
- You should receive an outcome within 21 working days. You will be guided, supported, and updated throughout this process.
- If you are unhappy with the outcome, you should raise with your Line Manager/Investigating Officer.

## **LESSONS LEARNT**

In line with our on-going learning and improvement culture, it is imperative that lessons are learned, shared, and fed back within the Team. Some may be only directly relevant to a particular case but where concerns raised impact on organisational policies, processes, quality, safety of effectiveness, then these will be addressed accordingly.