



LifeChurch Manchester (LCM) 'Whistleblowing' Policy

A guide to raising concerns

This Whistleblowing policy covers all leaders, staff members and volunteers who are part of LifeChurch Manchester (LCM), and LifeCentre Events (LCE).

LCM and LCE seek to run all areas of the church and the conference centre with the highest standard of conduct and integrity.

We seek to love people well and respect everyone we interact with, while building a culture of trust and openness so that anyone who has a genuine concern or suspicion can raise the matter with full confidence that it will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Whistleblowing is when an employee reports suspected past, present or imminent wrongdoing, or an attempt to conceal wrongdoing. In legislation it is called protected disclosure, and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA 1998) protects employees from suffering a detriment in their employment or being dismissed, if they make certain disclosures in accordance with the legislation. Following a Supreme Court case in 2019, it was deemed that under the Human Rights Act 1998, any individual who is appointed into a position of providing a service, should also be protected when making such disclosures. It is considered best practice for charities to provide similar protections to all volunteers, as to employees.

In the event that someone within LCM or LCE becomes aware of activities which give cause for concern, we will ensure that the concern can be raised in confidence, and that a thorough and appropriate investigation into the matter raised will take place.

Please note that if you have a safeguarding concern about someone, you should refer to the relevant Safeguarding Policy, or contact LCM's Designated Person for Safeguarding. See www.lifechurch.uk.net/safeguarding-policy for more details.

Specific types of disclosures are classed as 'whistleblowing' and qualify for protection. They are as follows:

- A criminal offence, for example fraud
- someone's health and safety is in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

In addition, if you have any concerns that a person in a position of authority or leadership is using any forms of coercion, manipulation or control over other people, LCM and LCE will class this disclosure as 'whistleblowing' and will qualify for protection.

Any concerns relating to disclosures of information listed above should be made in good faith, and which the person reporting it reasonably believes is either happening now, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future.

Any person who raises a whistleblowing concern will be protected against any form of victimisation or discrimination.

If you wish to make a qualifying disclosure you should report the situation to the Chair of the Trustees (Contact details are in the appendix at the end of this policy) If the concern involves the Chair of the Trustees then you should refer the concern to the Senior Leader.

You can report the concern anonymously, but we may not be able to take the concern further if you have not provided sufficient information for us to investigate the situation.

If you provide your name you can request confidentiality, and we will make every effort to protect your identity.

Although you are not expected to prove the truth of your concerns, you will need to demonstrate that you have reasonable grounds to raise them. However, you are not responsible for investigating the situation.

All qualifying disclosures will be promptly investigated and be treated seriously. You will be asked to attend a meeting, to which you can be accompanied by a trusted person. You may also be asked to provide a written witness statement, setting out the nature and details of your concern and the basis for it. After the meeting, you will be provided with a written update on the situation within 10 working days. This update may include LCM's conclusions, decisions and any actions that are to be taken, subject to the constraints of confidentiality and the law.

If, on conclusion of the above stages, you reasonably believe that appropriate action has still not been taken, you may then report the matter in good faith to the Safeguarding office at the North West Baptist Union by emailing safeguarding@nwba.org.uk

In addition, some independent bodies who may be able to help are the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales and the Health and Safety Executive.

Contact Details:

Chair of the Trustees:

Mark Smith

marks@lifechurch.uk.net

Senior Leader:

Andy Barclay-Watt

andybw@lifechurch.uk.net