



Whistleblowing Policy

MHW Foundation CIO

Date Adopted: 12/10/2025

1. Policy Statement

MHW Foundation CIO is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in all its activities. We encourage trustees, staff, volunteers, counsellors, and contractors to report any concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or misconduct without fear of reprisal. This policy ensures that individuals can raise concerns safely and confidentially, and that all allegations are handled promptly, fairly, and in accordance with UK legislation.

2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for reporting serious concerns that could damage the charity, its beneficiaries, or the public. It applies to all individuals connected to MHW Foundation CIO, including trustees, employees, agency workers, counsellors, contractors, and volunteers.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by the following legislation and principles:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Charities Act 2011
- ACAS Code of Practice on Whistleblowing
- Charity Commission Guidance: 'Protecting charities from harm - compliance toolkit'

4. Principles of the Policy

MHW Foundation CIO is committed to creating an environment where concerns can be raised openly and without fear of victimisation. We ensure confidentiality, fair investigation, and protection from retaliation for all whistleblowers acting in good faith.

5. What Constitutes a Whistleblowing Concern

If the concern relates to the welfare or safety of a child, young person, or adult at risk, the safeguarding policy and procedures must also be followed. Whistleblowing does not replace safeguarding referrals - both may run in parallel.



Whistleblowing concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- Safeguarding breaches or failure to protect vulnerable people
- Fraud, theft, or misuse of charitable funds
- Financial malpractice or mismanagement
- Abuse of power or authority
- Breach of legal or regulatory obligations
- Discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- Serious breaches of health and safety
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

6. How to Raise a Concern

a) Internal Reporting:

Concerns should be reported as soon as possible to the Designated Whistleblowing Officer

Chair of Trustees: Anthony Young

Email: anthony@mhw-foundation.org

c) External Reporting:

If it is not appropriate to report internally, or the concern remains unresolved, individuals may contact:

- Charity Commission (www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity)
- Protect Whistleblowing Advice Line: 020 3117 2520
- Local Authority Safeguarding Team
- The Police (for criminal matters)
- Care Quality Commission (if relevant to care settings)

7. Protection for Whistleblowers

MHW Foundation CIO is committed to protecting individuals who raise concerns in good faith. No person will suffer harassment, victimisation, or any adverse treatment as a result of disclosing information. Any form of retaliation will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

8. Confidentiality

All whistleblowing reports will be treated in the strictest confidence. The identity of the whistleblower will not be disclosed without their consent unless required by law. Anonymous disclosures will be considered where sufficient information is provided to investigate the matter.

All data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.



9. Investigation Procedure

Upon receipt of a concern, the Whistleblowing Officer will acknowledge it within five working days. A preliminary assessment will determine the nature of the concern and the appropriate course of action. An impartial investigation will then be conducted, with findings reported to the Chair of Trustees. A summary of the outcome will be shared with the whistleblower unless confidentiality or legal restrictions apply.

Investigations will normally be completed within **30 working days** where possible. If more time is required, the whistleblower will be informed of progress and expected timescales.

All whistleblowing reports and investigation records will be retained securely for a minimum of seven years and handled in line with data protection legislation.

10. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

While the charity recognises that genuine mistakes may occur, malicious or knowingly false allegations are not acceptable. Individuals found to have made such reports may face disciplinary action or be referred to external authorities.

11. External Reporting Contacts

If whistleblowers do not feel comfortable reporting internally, or believe the concern has not been properly addressed, they may contact one of the following external bodies:

- The Charity Commission for England and Wales
- Protect (Whistleblowing Charity)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Local Authority Safeguarding Team
- The Police
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the trustees, led by the Chair, to ensure continued effectiveness and compliance with current legislation. Feedback from staff, counsellors, and volunteers will be considered as part of this review.

Approved and adopted by the trustees of MHW Foundation CIO on: 12/10/2025



Signed: *A Young* (Anthony Young, Chair of Trustees)