

# **FSE Whistleblowing**

# **Policy and Procedure**

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**THE EUROPEAN SCOUT FEDERATION**

**(BRITISH ASSOCIATION)**

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## INTRODUCTION

### What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing encourages and enables leaders, adults and volunteers to raise concerns **within** the FSE rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

The term whistleblower is used within this document in relation to the person raising the concern and or making the complaint. This terminology is not used in a disparaging way but remains consistent with recommendations by Gov.uk (2013) who state:

*"Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Officially this is called 'making a disclosure in the public interest'".*

*A worker can report things that aren't right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties, including:*

- *someone's health and safety is in danger*
- *damage to the environment*
- *a criminal offence*
- *the company isn't obeying the law (like not having the right insurance)*
- *covering up wrongdoing*

Leaders, adults and volunteers are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong within the Association. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Association.

### SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy applies to all adults within the FSE: (Leaders, Adult Members and Helpers).

The policy aims to:

- To provide avenues for concerns to be raised in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.
- Ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- Reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

## DEFINITIONS AND/OR ABBREVIATIONS

<b>FSE / Association</b>	Federation European Scouts (British Association)
<b>Children / young people</b>	Individuals aged under-18
<b>Adult</b>	Any member of the FSE aged 18 or over (Leader, Adult Member, Helper)

## FSE COMMITMENTS

The Association is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect that if any adults within the FSE have cause for concern about the activities of another member this procedure will allow for such issues to be raised in a confidential manner and for appropriate measures to be put in place whilst a satisfactory conclusion is determined.

It is recognised that some concerns may be of a sensitive nature and will be dealt as such. Each member who has a genuine concern can raise the matter in full confidence and be assured that the matter will be dealt with appropriately.

This document is to be used where concerns or complaints fall outside of any other existing policy, procedure or guideline which would be more appropriately applied.

## EXAMPLES OF CONCERN

The following examples are guidelines as to when whistleblowing procedures might be followed.

- Unacceptable behaviour towards another adult or child which could form emotional, sexual or verbal abuse, rough handling, oppressive or discriminatory behaviour or exploitive acts for material or sexual gain.
- Any unlawful activities, whether criminal or breach of civil law.
- Fraud, theft or corruption.
- Concerns regarding possible breaches of health and safety regulations.
- The unauthorised use of European Scout Federation (FSE) funds.
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures laid down by the organisation.

The Association recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to the FSE and those for whom you provide a service.

The Association will not tolerate any harassment of victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. However, in some cases you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy does encourage you to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that you:

- must disclose the information in good faith
- must believe it to be substantially true
- must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations
- must **not** seek any personal gain

## **PROCEDURE**

The Association has a number of designated persons whom the whistleblower may approach with their concerns.

Whom they approach first will depend on the seriousness or nature of the concern. This will normally be the section leader or GSM and can be done in person, by telephone or in written form marked confidential. All matters will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Once in receipt of information the designated person will do all that they can to establish the facts and decide if there are foundations to the concern and if the matter can be resolved internally or if third parties such as the police are required.

The conclusions of the raised concern will be relayed to the whistleblower.

If the whistleblower still has concerns or feels that the matter has been dealt with unsatisfactorily or inappropriately they can then take it to the next level i.e.:

GSM to Province Commissioner

Province Commissioner to

- National Commissioner
- National Treasurer (if finance related)
- Child Protection Coordinator (as appropriate).