# **Rare Autoinflammatory Conditions’ Community- UK**



# **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY 2019**

**Date Approved: Date for Review: November 2020**

**Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees:**

**WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY STATEMENT**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
	1. Rare Autoinflammatory Conditions’ Community- UK (RACC-UK) is committed to the provision of the highest quality services to its clients and to being open, honest and accountable in delivering these services. Whilst RACC-UK has set in place rules, regulations, quality standards and procedures to ensure that the highest standards of conduct and commitment to service are followed, irregularities, wrongdoing or serious failures in standards do sometimes occur. RACC-UK wants to identify and remove such malpractice in the performance of its services.
	2. The greatest deterrent to malpractice or wrongdoing is the probability that it will be reported and investigated; that those who are responsible for any malpractice will be punished; and that any wrongdoing will be promptly remedied.
	3. This Policy Statement is therefore intended to provide a clear indication that any malpractice on the part of either RACC-UK employees or Volunteers which comes to the attention of the organisation will be swiftly and thoroughly investigated.
	4. RACC-UK will also look at ways to ensure that such malpractice or wrongdoing can be prevented in the future.
2. **AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE POLICY**
	1. This policy provides all employees and volunteers of RACC-UK with
* Processes by which they can raise concerns and receive feedback on any actions taken.
* Reassurances that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing.
	1. The examples listed below illustrate the types of issues which might be considered as malpractice or wrongdoing and could justifiably be raised under this Whistleblowing policy: Disclosures of malpractice or wrongdoing should be made in the public interest.
1. Any unlawful act, whether criminal or in breach of civil law; any failure to comply with legal obligations; any situation where a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
2. Maladministration, as defined by the Local Government Ombudsman;
3. Breach of any statutory Code of Practice;
4. Breach of, or failure to implement or comply with, any policy determined by RACC-UK;
5. Failure to comply with appropriate professional standards;
6. Corruption or fraud, including obtaining money (e.g. grants) without entitlement;
7. Misuse of assets, including stores, equipment, vehicles, building, computer hardware and software;
8. Endangering the health and safety of any individual with actions which are likely to cause physical danger, or which could give rise to a risk of significant damage to property;
9. Failure to take reasonable steps to report and rectify any situation which is likely to give rise to a significant avoidable cost, or loss of income, to RACC-UK;
10. Abuse of power;
11. Unfair discrimination;
12. Causing damage to the environment;
13. Deliberately concealing information in relation to any of the items on this list.
	1. This Whistleblowing policy is intended to provide a channel for those instances where the person reporting the matter feels that, for any reason, they cannot make use of the existing complaints or grievance procedures. For example, an employee wishing to make a complaint about a breach of their own employment contract should do so through the grievance policy.
	2. This Whistleblowing policy is also intended to cover any concerns that staff may have about the conduct of individuals occupying positions of trust within the organisation which could be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of children, young people or vulnerable adults and where staff, for whatever reason, feel unable to raise them under the organisation’s standard child protection procedures for dealing with such allegations. It would include issues about:

• Unprofessional behaviour

• Bullying by staff

• Any form of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or neglect)

• Name calling

• Personal contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults which is contrary to the organisations policies and codes of conduct

• Any form of racial abuse

• Inappropriate sexualised behaviour

• Knowledge about an individual’s personal circumstances which may indicate they could be a risk to children or unsuitable to work with children

Please be mindful that these are examples of concerns, and that this is not an exhaustive list.

1. **CO-OPERATION AND SAFEGUARDS**
	1. In many cases, it is the employees and volunteers at RACC-UK who are likely to be in the best position to learn of any malpractice or wrongdoing and to identify something which falls below the standards which RACC-UK requires. RACC-UK expects the fullest cooperation of all its employees and volunteers in securing the highest standards of service. This means that, where employees or volunteers of RACC-UK are aware of, or suspect malpractice, they should not hesitate to report these suspicions. Where they fail to report their suspicions, they themselves become implicated in the wrongdoing. RACC-UK will treat failure by an employee or volunteer to report such concerns as a serious matter.
	2. RACC-UK will respect the confidentiality of any whistleblowing complaint received, where the complainant requests that confidentiality be maintained. However, it must be appreciated that it will be easier to follow up and verify complaints if the complainant is prepared to give his/her name. Unsupported anonymous complaints and allegations will have to be treated with caution.
	3. Any reporting system will be of little effect if those who should use it are afraid that, as a result of making their report, they may experience recriminations, victimisation or harassment. RACC-UK will, therefore, not tolerate any attempt on the part of any employee or volunteer to take reprisals against any person who has reported any serious and genuine concern relating to any perceived malpractice. RACC-UK will treat any such recriminations, victimisation or harassment by any employee or volunteer as a serious matter.
	4. **Whistleblowers may also have statutory protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which aims to protect individuals who make certain disclosures of Information in the public interest and who are then victimised in their employment.**
	5. RACC-UK will conscientiously investigate any complaints which it receives. As a consequence of this, it will view very seriously any false or malicious allegations which it receives and will regard the making of any deliberately malicious or vexatious allegations by any employee or volunteer as a serious disciplinary offence.
2. **HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN**
	1. It is envisaged that the whistleblower’s line manager will normally be the first point of contact. It will be their responsibility to investigate all matters reported to them promptly and in accordance with the procedure notes issued.
	2. There may be times when an employee or volunteer feels unable to use the above procedure, for example when the whistleblower feels that their Manager may be involved in the malpractice. In such instances, the whistleblower should raise their concerns directly with the Organisation Director.
	3. Where this is not appropriate, the whistleblower should raise their concerns with the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, who has been appointed to act as the RACC-UK Whistleblowing Officer, with the following remit:
3. To receive and record any complaints under this policy;
4. To ensure the confidentiality of any whistleblowing complainant who requests that their complaint be treated in confidence;
5. To investigate promptly any whistleblowing complaint and to respond directly to the complainant;
6. To report to the appropriate person (line manager/ Organisation Director/ Chairperson of the Board of Trustees) any serious concerns highlighted in the course of their initial investigation, and to recommend the use of any relevant statutory powers or duties.
7. To report as appropriate to the Board of Trustees by email: info@raccuk.com / support@raccuk.com
	1. Where possible concerns should be presented in the form of written statements. This will provide the whistleblower with the opportunity to set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places wherever possible, and outlining the reason why the complainant is particularly concerned about the situation.
	2. Although whistleblowers are not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person they choose to contact that there are sufficient grounds for concern.
8. **HOW RACC-UK WILL RESPOND**

* 1. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.
	2. Within 10 working days of a concern being received, RACC-UK will write to the whistleblower.
* Acknowledging that the concern has been received;
* Indicating how it proposes to deal with the matter;
* Stating whether further investigations will take place and if so by whom; but if not, why not.
	1. When any meeting is arranged, the whistleblower has the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by a professional association representative or a friend who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.
	2. RACC-UK will take steps to minimise any difficulties which the whistleblower may experience as a result of raising a concern.
	3. RACC-UK accepts that the whistleblower needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, information about the progress and outcome of any investigations will be given.
	4. It may be necessary for the whistleblower to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings.
	5. If the concerns are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed. The whistleblower will not be treated or regarded any differently for having raised the concern and their confidentiality will continue to be protected where previously requested.

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