

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Policy statement

Reform Judaism protects employees who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters from being dismissed or from being subjected to detrimental treatment or victimised, provided certain criteria are met. This process, known as whistleblowing, is officially called 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and as such it refers to a worker reporting suspected wrongdoing in the workplace.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 establishes the kinds of disclosure which may be protected and the circumstances in which disclosures are protected. This policy is therefore intended to comply with the Act by encouraging employees to make disclosures about fraud, misconduct, bribery or other wrongdoing to The Movement for Reform Judaism, without fear of reprisal. Therefore problems can be dealt with and resolved quickly.

As an employee you are protected provided that you reveal the right type of information, known as a 'qualifying disclosure'. This disclosure must be revealed to the right person, in the correct manner. By doing so this makes it a 'protected disclosure'.

Qualifying disclosures

Certain kinds of disclosure qualify for protection. These are disclosures of information which are made in good faith and which you reasonably believe is a failing that is currently happening, has taken place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future.

Examples of qualifying disclosures:-

- A criminal offence: in particular fraud, theft or acts of bribery
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to health and safety (including sexual harassment or bullying)
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information (covering up wrongdoing)

Only disclosures of information that fall within one or more of these six categories qualify for protection.

Your belief must be reasonable, but it need not be correct. It might be discovered subsequently that you were, in fact, wrong or mistaken. However, you must be able to show that you held the belief in good faith and that it was reasonable to hold in the circumstances at the time.

It is always the responsibility of the organisation to investigate when a disclosure has been made; it is not up to the whistleblower themselves.

Protected disclosures

For a qualifying disclosure to be protected, you are encouraged to raise the issue internally in the first instance. Such disclosures must be made in good faith i.e. with honest intent and without malice or an ulterior motive.

You are protected if you make a qualifying disclosure to:

1. Reform Judaism OR
2. Where you reasonably believe that the relevant failure relates solely or mainly to the conduct of a person other than Reform Judaism or any other matter for which a person other than Reform Judaism has a legal responsibility, to raise it to that other person.

You are encouraged to raise any disclosures that you may have by following the procedure set out below. If your concern relates to a breach of your own contract of employment, you should use the Reform Judaism's grievance procedure.

The Disclosure Procedure

This procedure applies to staff whether permanent or temporary, and in addition third parties such as agency workers, consultants, contractors and any others who perform functions in relation to Reform Judaism.

1. Report the disclosure in writing to your line manager or senior manager promptly so that an investigation may proceed and any action taken expeditiously. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to your line manager or senior manager you may contact a Trustee. If wish to make a disclosure to someone completely independent, you may do so via: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/advice-line/>
2. All qualifying disclosures will be treated seriously. The disclosure will be investigated and as part of this process you will be interviewed and may be asked to provide a written statement setting out the details of your disclosure and the basis for it. Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigation to the extent that it is practical and appropriate given the circumstances. However, depending on the nature of the disclosure, Reform Judaism may need to interview other individuals during the process.
3. Once the investigation has been completed you will be informed in writing of the outcome and Reform Judaism's conclusions and decision as soon as possible. Any appropriate action will then be taken if necessary.
4. You will not be penalised for raising a qualifying disclosure even if it not upheld, unless the complaint was both untrue and in bad faith.
5. If you believe that the appropriate action has not been taken, you may report the matter externally to a relevant authority in accordance with the provisions of the Act. In relation to children, this can be via Protect (part of the NSPCC) that offers free and confidential whistleblowing advice for concerns in the workplace – their helpline number is 020 3117 2520. Alternatively the local 'Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8359 4066. Outside office hours, they can be contacted in an emergency on: 020 8359 2000

Key points

Report anything that you believe is illegal or unlawful in the workplace.

- ✓ You will not be victimised, treated detrimentally or dismissed for raising a protected disclosure under this policy. Subsequent victimisation will be a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the Reform Judaism's disciplinary procedure.
- ✓ Covering up someone else's wrongdoing is also a disciplinary offence. Never agree to remain silent, even if told to do so by a person in authority, such as your Line Manager.
- ✓ Your right to make a protected disclosure when following the correct procedure overrides any confidentiality provisions in your contract of employment.
- ✓ Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.