Aspect Housing Ltd
Whistleblowing Policy

(Reviewed and Updated 2025)

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Aspect Housing

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1. Quick Reference Guide (Summary)

- Employees are encouraged to report concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or safeguarding risks.
- Reports will be taken seriously and investigated fairly.
- Whistleblowers are legally protected from dismissal, victimisation, or detriment.
- Anonymous reports may be considered, but named reports are preferred.
- Safeguarding of residents is the top priority.

2. Policy Statement

Aspect Housing Ltd is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity, and accountability. Staff should feel able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisal. This policy provides a framework for doing so.

3. Aims and Objectives

- Encourage staff to report concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure concerns are investigated thoroughly and fairly.
- Protect staff from victimisation for making disclosures in good faith.
- Promote a safeguarding-first culture.

4. Scope

Covers concerns in the public interest, including but not limited to:

- Fraud, theft, or financial malpractice.
- Criminal activity.
- Breaches of legal or regulatory duties.
- Safeguarding risks to residents.
- Health and safety dangers.
- Discrimination, harassment, or unethical conduct.
- Concealment of wrongdoing.

5. Responsibilities

Organisation

- Provide secure and confidential channels for disclosures.
- Protect whistleblowers from retaliation.
- Act promptly on concerns raised.

Managers

- Take disclosures seriously and escalate appropriately.

- Maintain confidentiality.
- Support staff who raise concerns.

Staff
- Report concerns promptly and in good faith.
- Use internal reporting channels before external disclosure where possible.

6. Protection for Whistleblowers

Under PIDA 1998 and the Employment Rights Act 1996, whistleblowers are legally protected if:
- They reasonably believe the concern is in the public interest.
- The disclosure is made in good faith to an appropriate person.

No employee will suffer detriment or dismissal for raising a genuine concern.

7. Confidentiality and Anonymous Reporting

- The identity of whistleblowers will be kept confidential where possible.
- Anonymous disclosures will be considered, but may be harder to investigate.

8. Types of Concerns Covered

This policy is not for:
- Personal grievances (covered under Grievance Policy).
- Disciplinary issues (covered under Disciplinary Policy).

It applies only to matters of public interest.

9. Procedure for Raising a Concern

- Concerns should be reported to the line manager or HR.
- If inappropriate, concerns can be reported directly to the Director.
- Safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

10. Investigating a Disclosure

- An acknowledgement will be given within 5 working days.
- An investigation will be carried out promptly and proportionately.
- Findings will be reported in writing to the whistleblower where possible.
- If criminal activity is suspected, the police will be informed.

11. External Disclosures

If internal procedures fail, disclosures may be made to prescribed regulators such as:
- Care Quality Commission (if care services involved).
- Health and Safety Executive.
- Regulator of Social Housing.
- Local Authority Safeguarding Boards.

12. Malicious Allegations

No action will be taken against whistleblowers acting in good faith, even if allegations are not substantiated.
However, malicious or vexatious allegations may lead to disciplinary action.

13. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All records of disclosures will be kept secure and confidential, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

14. Safeguarding Considerations

Where disclosures relate to safeguarding, they will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, if required, Birmingham Safeguarding Adults Board or the police.

15. Legislative Framework

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended)
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- Employment Rights Bill 2024/25 (whistleblowing protections, fire-and-rehire)
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- ACAS Guidance on Whistleblowing

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.
Updates will be approved by the Director.