Title of Policy:	**Whistleblowing**
Section:	**Human Resources**

Purpose

This policy sets out the position of Carers Choices on the question of whistleblowing and provides detailed advice.

Statement

As an organisation where the highest standards of integrity and trust are expected by our Clients Carers Choices is committed to maintain exemplary levels of honesty, openness and transparency in all its dealings and actions. Therefore, Carers Choices treats unprofessional conduct very seriously, whether it is committed by managers, employees, suppliers or contractors.

It is recognised that an employee may find it difficult to raise concerns of malpractice or misconduct. This policy will provide a means to raise any concerns so that they can be investigated properly, sensitively and in confidence. Carers Choices also recognises the need to ensure any employee using this system is protected from receiving or suffering any disadvantage as a result of raising a concern in good faith.

Procedure and Guidance

Whistleblowing is a term used when someone who works in or for an organisation raises a concern about a possible fraud, crime, danger or other serious risk that could threaten customers, colleagues, shareholders, the public or the organisation's own reputation.

If any employee brings information about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain ways under the

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, so people are encouraged to speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation.

Public Interest Disclosure

“Blowing the whistle” is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest.' Disclosure of information is information, which, in the reasonable belief of the employee making the disclosure, tends to show one or more of the following:

- That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or, is likely to be committed.
- That a person has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he is subject.
- That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered.
- That the environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged.
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Any employee who has a concern regarding malpractice and misconduct within Carers Choices, related to the above should raise that concern internally, rather than externally, wherever possible. The employee is free to choose to whom the matter is to be disclosed but it is recommended that he/she reports the matter to his/her immediate supervisor in the first instance.

Should the report concern the supervisor then the matter can be disclosed to any member of the senior management. This policy is not intended however to replace Carers Choices’ Grievance Procedure that remains the proper method of dealing with issues of a personal nature relating to matters of employment.

Matters can be raised either verbally or in writing.

- Disclosures should be provided with full details and, where possible, supporting evidence.
- Any disclosure made under this policy will be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- Any origin of an allegation will be kept confidential wherever possible.
- Anonymous disclosures may be made; however, this type of disclosure can make investigations difficult.

Upon receipt of a disclosure made under this policy, the supervisor, manager or director will confirm to the employee what steps will be taken to investigate the matter, the likely timeframe and how the outcome may be communicated. The manner in which such an investigation takes place, and the precise steps which may be necessary to reach a conclusion will usually reflect the seriousness and/or complexity of the allegations in the disclosure.

- Anyone reporting allegations will be given appropriate advice and support during the process.
- Where possible Carers Choices will inform the employee of the outcome of the investigation.

On occasion, and at its discretion, Carers Choices may identify a third party to investigate the matter and report its findings.

It is both a fundamental principle and a legal requirement that employees will not be punished or subject to detrimental action as a result of making a disclosure in accordance with this policy. Any harassment, victimisation or less favourable treatment of any persons will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Should any employee make a disingenuous disclosure i.e., in order to cause disruption to Carers Choices or without reasonable belief, or accuracy, disciplinary action may be taken against such an individual.

Use of this policy will not affect any duty of confidentiality an employee may owe Carers Choices. Under the duty of confidentiality employees may not disclose confidential information about Carers Choices without authorisation.

In all cases employees are encouraged to exhaust Carers Choices' internal procedures before considering the possible contact of external sources.

CQC Registration and Inspection Compliance

Key Questions and Quality Statements applicable to this Policy	Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009 applicable to this Policy
Safe • Safeguarding Well-Led • Governance, management and sustainability Responsive • Providing information • Listening to and involving people	Regulation 18: Notification of other incidents

Legislative Compliance

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 applicable to this Policy	Other legislation relevant to this Policy
Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment Regulation 20: Duty of candour	Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

Policy Reviewed on Date of Implementation by the Following Company Officer:

Full name:

Paul Ramsden

Job Title:

CEO

Signature:

P. Ramsden