



# Whistleblowing and Allegation Management Policy

Autism Mentors Ltd – Neurodiversity Mentoring & Support Services

Location: Oxfordshire, UK

Effective Date: 1st September 2025

Review Date: September 2026

## 1. Policy Statement

Autism Mentors Ltd is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. We aim to create a culture where staff, contractors, and volunteers feel safe and empowered to raise concerns about wrongdoing, poor practice, or risks to individuals' welfare without fear of reprisals.

We recognise our legal and moral duty to ensure all allegations involving children or vulnerable adults are responded to promptly and appropriately in line with safeguarding expectations.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines:

- How concerns ("whistleblowing") can be raised safely.
- How allegations against staff or contractors will be managed.
- The difference between whistleblowing and safeguarding/complaints procedures.
- Legal protections for whistleblowers under UK law.

### 3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy complies with:

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA)
- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Care Act 2014 (for adults at risk)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2023)
- Guidance from Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) and Adult Board (OSAB)

### 4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees, self-employed contractors, and volunteers.
- Concerns raised about any individual connected with the organisation.
- Situations occurring in homes, schools, community settings, or online.

### 5. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing involves reporting concerns where:

- A child or adult is at risk of harm or abuse.
- Unsafe or unlawful practice is occurring (e.g., fraud, neglect, discrimination).
- There is a cover-up of wrongdoing.
- The organisation or individual is failing to meet legal or ethical standards.

Note: This differs from a personal grievance or complaint, which should follow HR or formal complaints procedures.

## 6. How to Raise a Concern

1. Immediate reporting: Raise concerns as soon as possible with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Manager:

DSL: Michelle Wray

- Tel: 07707 764876
- Email: dsl@autismmentors.co.uk

2. Manager: Beth Carter

- Tel: 07979 692297
- Email: beth@autismmentors.co.uk

3. If the concern involves the DSL or senior staff:

- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Oxfordshire County Council: Tel: 0800 0121 700
- Ofsted, CQC, or NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: Tel: 0800 028 0285

Concerns can be raised anonymously, though this may limit the ability to fully investigate.

## 7. Whistleblower Protection

Under PIDA, whistleblowers are protected from:

- Dismissal or penalty for raising concerns.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Any detriment due to reporting genuine concerns.

The organisation will handle all concerns sensitively and maintain confidentiality wherever possible.

## **8. Managing Allegations Against Staff or Contractors**

Allegations of misconduct, harm, or criminal behaviour will be taken seriously and referred to LADO or the Adult Safeguarding Team.

The DSL will:

- Record the allegation and notify the relevant safeguarding authority.
- Cooperate with statutory agencies during the investigation.
- Ensure support for both the person raising the concern and the accused individual.

Suspension may be applied during investigations where necessary.

## **9. False or Malicious Allegations**

- Individuals raising concerns in good faith are protected.
- Deliberately false or malicious allegations will be investigated and may result in disciplinary or legal action.

## **10. Record-Keeping**

- All whistleblowing reports and investigation records are maintained securely and confidentially.
- Records are retained in line with data protection and safeguarding legislation.

## **11. Training and Awareness**


- All staff and contractors receive safeguarding and whistleblowing training.
- Staff are informed on how to report concerns and where to seek independent advice.

## **12. Review and Monitoring**

This policy is reviewed annually or after:

- A whistleblowing incident.
- Updates in legislation.

## Policy Approval

Signed: 

Name: Michelle Wray [Director / Safeguarding Lead]

Date: 1/9/25