



## **Whistleblowing Policy**

### **1. Purpose of this Policy**

The Special Lioness is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity, and accountability. We encourage trustees, staff, volunteers, families, partners, and members of the public to raise any concerns they may have about wrongdoing within the charity.

This policy explains how individuals can report concerns safely and confidentially, without fear of victimisation or disadvantage.

Whistleblowing is when someone reports a concern that is in the public interest, something that affects others, not just themselves.

### **2. Our Commitment**

The Special Lioness will:

- Take all concerns seriously
- Treat all disclosures sensitively and confidentially
- Protect whistleblowers from retaliation or disadvantage
- Investigate concerns promptly and fairly
- Take appropriate action where wrongdoing is identified

No one will be penalised for raising a genuine concern, even if it turns out to be mistaken.

### **3. What Can Be Reported?**

Whistleblowing concerns may include (but are not limited to):

- Safeguarding concerns involving children or adults at risk
- Criminal activity
- Fraud, financial mismanagement, or misuse of charity funds
- Breaches of legal or regulatory obligations
- Serious health and safety risks
- Abuse of power or position
- Discrimination, harassment, or bullying



- Cover-ups of any wrongdoing

This policy is not for personal grievances or disputes, these should be raised through the Complaints or Grievance Procedure.

#### **4. Who Can Raise a Concern?**

Anyone connected to The Special Lioness may raise a whistleblowing concern, including:

- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Families accessing services
- Members of the public

#### **5. How to Raise a Concern**

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing. You should provide as much detail as possible, including dates, names, and any evidence you have.

Concerns can be reported to:

The Chair of Trustees

Email: [Claire@thespeciallioness.com](mailto:Claire@thespeciallioness.com)

Safeguarding Team

Email: [amy@thespeciallioness.com](mailto:amy@thespeciallioness.com)

If the concern involves the Chair or Safeguarding Lead

You may contact another trustee directly.

Email: [Justine@thespeciallioness.com](mailto:Justine@thespeciallioness.com)

#### **External Reporting Options**

If you feel unable to raise the concern internally, or believe the issue has not been handled properly, you may contact:

- Charity Commission for England and Wales



- Local Authority Safeguarding Team
- Police (if criminal activity is suspected)

## **6. Confidentiality**

All concerns will be handled in confidence. Your identity will not be shared without your consent unless required by law (e.g., safeguarding or criminal investigations).

Anonymous concerns will be considered, though they may be harder to investigate.

## **7. Protection from Victimisation**

The Special Lioness will not tolerate any form of retaliation against someone who raises a concern in good faith.

Anyone found to be victimising or retaliating against a whistleblower will face disciplinary action.

## **8. How Concerns Will Be Handled**

Once a concern is raised:

1. It will be acknowledged within a reasonable timeframe.
2. An initial assessment will determine whether a full investigation is required.
3. An impartial investigator may be appointed.
4. The whistleblower will be kept informed where appropriate.
5. Findings will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees.
6. Appropriate action will be taken based on the outcome.

Where safeguarding concerns are raised, statutory procedures will be followed.

## **9. Malicious or Vexatious Allegations**

Raising a concern maliciously or knowingly providing false information is a serious matter and may result in disciplinary action.

However, honest mistakes or misunderstandings will not be penalised.

## **10. Review of this Policy**



This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.