

1. Purpose and Scope

Grass Roots Music C.I.C. is committed to the highest standards of openness, honesty, and accountability. This policy encourages staff, volunteers, and others who work with us, including participants, to report concerns about any wrongdoing that may occur within the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, concerns about child protection, abuse, fraud, corruption, or any form of unethical behaviour.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees, contractors, and other persons working with or on behalf of Grass Roots Music C.I.C., particularly those working with young and vulnerable individuals.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the act of raising a concern about a situation or activity that is believed to be wrong, illegal, or unethical. The concern may be related to something happening within the organisation or something that involves a third party, such as a supplier or partner.

Examples of issues that may be raised include:

- **Child protection concerns** (e.g., neglect or abuse)
- **Safeguarding failures** or unsafe practices
- **Financial misconduct** (e.g., fraud, theft)
- **Corruption or bribery**
- **Discriminatory or unethical behaviour**

3. How to Raise a Concern

If you have a concern about any wrongdoing, you should raise it as soon as possible. The following steps should be followed:

- **Step 1:** In most cases, you should report the concern to your line manager or supervisor. They will acknowledge receipt and address the concern promptly.

- **Step 2:** If the concern involves your line manager, or if you feel that reporting it to them would not be appropriate, you may contact the designated safeguarding lead or the Chair of Trustees directly.
- **Step 3:** If, after following the above steps, you feel the matter is not resolved, you can escalate it further to the appropriate external bodies such as the local authority or regulatory bodies.

4. Confidentiality

Grass Roots Music C.I.C. will take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of those who report concerns. Any information disclosed will be treated with discretion, and anonymity will be preserved where possible. However, it is important to understand that there may be circumstances where full confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, particularly if the concern involves child protection or safeguarding issues.

5. Protection from Retaliation

Grass Roots Music C.I.C. is committed to ensuring that no individual will suffer any form of retaliation or adverse consequence for raising a concern in good faith. Retaliation or victimisation against a whistleblower will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.

6. Investigation of Concerns

All concerns raised will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. Where appropriate, Grass Roots Music C.I.C. will involve external bodies such as the police or safeguarding authorities. The whistleblower will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the investigation where possible.

7. Contact Information

If you wish to raise a concern under this policy, you can contact the following:

- **Safeguarding Lead:**
Name: Simon Smith
Email: si@grmusic.org
- **External Whistleblowing Contact (e.g., NSPCC or local safeguarding authority):**
NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

8. Conclusion

Grass Roots Music C.I.C. is committed to ensuring the safety, integrity, and ethical standards of its operations. Whistleblowing is an important tool in identifying and addressing potential issues, and we encourage staff, volunteers, and others to raise concerns whenever necessary. This policy supports our mission to provide a safe, transparent, and accountable environment for young people and vulnerable groups.

Policy Review Date:

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains up to date and in line with best practices and national guidelines.