

## Rising Voices Wessex – Fraud Policy

### 1.1 Introduction:

The purpose of this statement gives Rising Voices Wessex's policy on fraud and sets out our responsibilities for its prevention. It also refers you to the Fraud Response Plan, which outlines the action to be taken if you discover or suspect fraud.



Rising Voices Wessex requires Trustees, staff and volunteers at all times to act honestly and with integrity and to safeguard the resources for which they are responsible. Fraud is an ever-present threat to these resources and hence must be a concern of all members of staff.

### 2. What is Fraud?

The term fraud is used to describe a whole range of activities such as deception, bribery, forgery, extortion, corruption, theft, conspiracy, embezzlement, misappropriation, false representation, concealment of material facts and collusion. Generally, however, fraud involves the intention to deceive a person or organisation in order to obtain an advantage, avoid an obligation or cause loss.

The term also includes the use of information technology equipment to manipulate programs or data dishonestly, the theft of IT equipment and software, and the intentional misuse of computer time and resources.

### Rising Voices Wessex's Attitude to Fraud

**3. Rising Voices Wessex** takes the most serious view of any attempt to commit fraud by Trustees, staff, volunteers, contractors, their employees and agents acting on behalf of the Rising Voices Wessex, and others. Any person involved in impropriety of any kind will be subject to disciplinary action, including prosecution, if appropriate. Rising Voices Wessex treats attempted fraud as seriously as accomplished fraud.

#### 3.1 Responsibilities

Rising Voices Wessex is responsible to the Trustees for:

- developing and maintaining effective controls to help prevent or detect fraud;
- carrying out vigorous and prompt investigations if fraud occurs;
- taking appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action against perpetrators of fraud;
- taking disciplinary action against persons where their failures have contributed to the commission of the fraud.

Trustees are responsible for the prevention and detection of fraud by ensuring that an adequate system of internal control exists within their areas of responsibility, and these controls operate effectively.

### **3.2 As a result there is a need for all Trustees :**

- identify and assess the risks involved in the operations for which they are responsible;
- develop and maintain effective controls to prevent and detect fraud;
- ensure compliance with controls; and
- ensure that agreed procedures are followed.

### **3.3 Every member of Rising Voices Wessex:**

- has a duty to ensure that public funds, Rising Voices Wessex' reputation and its assets are safeguarded;
- should alert Trustees where they believe the opportunity for fraud exists because of poor procedures or lack of effective supervision;
- has a responsibility to report details of (a) any suspected or actual fraud, or (b) any suspicious acts or events, to the Trustees and
- assist in any investigations by making available all relevant information and by co- operating in interviews.
- is responsible for investigating actual or suspected fraud,
- will complete a review of control systems once their investigation has been completed, and
- is available to offer advice and assistance on risk and control issues.

## **Fraud Response Plan**

Rising Voices Wessex has prepared a fraud response plan which can act as a checklist of actions and a guide to follow in the event of fraud being suspected (See plan below).

It covers issues such as:

- actions to be taken in the first 48 hours,
- who to report to,
- how to secure the evidence,
- how to prevent losses,
- who within Rising Voices Wessex will notify the Police and investigate fraud, and
- who has responsibility for notifying stakeholders and dealing with external enquiries.

A copy of the Fraud Response Plan can be found on the website, or obtained from the Trustees.

# Rising Voices Wessex Community Choir

## Fraud Response Plan

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Rising Voices Wessex has prepared this Fraud Response Plan to act as a procedural guide and provide a checklist of the required actions, which must be followed, in the event of a suspicion of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity, either actual or attempted.

1.2 Rising Voices Wessex policy is that all allegations of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity, anonymous or otherwise, will be investigated. It is important that all staff and volunteers know what to do in the event of a fraud, bribery or serious irregularity, so that appropriate action can be taken without delay. The objective of this Response Plan is to ensure that all suspicions of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity are reported and that timely and effective action is taken to prevent loss of funds or other assets, identify the fraudster(s) and maximise the Rising Voices Wessex ability to take successful disciplinary and/or legal action. This Plan forms part of the Rising Voices Wessex anti-fraud policy.

1.3 This Plan should be implemented immediately where suspicions of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity have been raised, whether internally involving Rising Voices Wessex staff, Musical Director (MD) Trustees, volunteers or steering group or externally involving grant funding awarded to Rising Voices Wessex.

### 2. Initiating Action

2.1 In the event of an act of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity being suspected, the officer should immediately report the matter to the steering group, who should notify the Trustees and /or MD. If there is concern that a member of the steering group may be involved, the matter should be reported to the next appropriate level.

2.2 After a suspicion has been raised, prompt action is essential. Where appropriate, it is for the appropriate steering group, Trustees or MD to undertake initial discreet enquiries to enable them to determine if further investigation may be necessary.

2.3 It is imperative that such enquiries should not prejudice subsequent investigations or corrupt evidence, therefore, if in doubt, ask for advice.

2.4 If, on examination of the evidence provided, it is determined that fraud, bribery or serious irregularity is not suspected, the MD or steering group will close the case.

2.5 If the MD or steering group is satisfied that fraud, bribery or serious irregularity may have occurred or has been attempted, this should be referred to the Trustees of the charity for full investigation. A referral form (Appendix 1) is attached; this should be completed as soon as possible and forwarded.



### **3. Management Responsibility**

3.1 When a case has been referred to the Trustees they must consider if the circumstances pose an increased risk to the charity. They must consider what action they deem necessary to minimise the risks, which may include moving a member of staff or volunteers to other duties or restricting access to the computer system.

3.2 In making such decisions, local management must liaise with the Trustees to ensure that any actions being considered will not impede further investigation.

### **4. Responsibility for Investigation**

4.1 On receipt of a referral in accordance with the Rising Voices Wessex fraud policy the Chair of the Trustees shall decide on the action to be taken. If the Chair is satisfied that a case of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity exists, the notification will be discussed with the other Trustees, who will take responsibility for the progress of any subsequent investigation. This will include referrals to human resources, legal advisors and the Police.

### **5. Notification of Fraud**

5.1 Managing Public Money requires a charity to report immediately, to the charity commission and auditors all frauds (proven or suspected), including attempted fraud. RV Fraud Plan V1 Oct 2014 3

### **6. Conducting Investigations**

6.1 If necessary, other bodies affected by the suspected act, will be involved in the scope of the investigation, determine the way forward and monitor and control progress. A Terms of Reference will be drawn up for the investigation.

6.2 In taking forward an investigation, Rising Voices Wessex should engage additional expertise if required. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to co-operate with requests for assistance during the course of an investigation.

6.3 Cases where potential criminality is uncovered will be referred to the Police.

6.4 Written records will be maintained once a concern has been raised, dated and signed by the appropriate person.

### **7. Action on Conclusion of an Investigation**

7.1 On conclusion of an investigation a written report will be prepared which, where appropriate, will cover:

- quantification of losses;
- any control issues identified;
- any recommendations to be made;
- if the report is being referred to the Police for consideration of prosecution.

(a) Reports on internal cases:

For each internal investigation, a report will be issued to the Trustees and if appropriate the Charities Commission or auditors.

(b) Reports on external cases:

For each external investigation, a report will be issued to the Trustees and the Charity Commission and/or auditors if appropriate.

7.2 Where appropriate, any control issues identified or recommendations made will be used by the MD and Trustees to review and enhance policy and procedures. RV Fraud Plan V1 Oct 2014 4

7.3 Where an act of fraud or bribery has been perpetrated or attempted, or where it is likely that a criminal act has taken place, the case will be referred to the police at the earliest opportunity.

7.4 Closure letters, setting out the outcome of the investigation will be issued to the staff, volunteers if (appropriate) and Trustees.

## **8. Statement of Complaint**

8.1 Following referral to the Police, it may be necessary to provide a Statement of Complaint.

## **9. Disciplinary Procedures and the Recovery of Losses**

9.1 Where an irregularity has been committed by a member of staff or volunteers, Conduct & Discipline procedures will take place with disciplinary procedures against the individual(s) involved as appropriate.

9.2 Recovering losses is a major objective of any investigation. Rising Voices Wessex will ensure that, where possible, the amount of any loss is quantified.

9.3 Recovery of losses should be sought in all cases. Rising Voices Wessex will seek repayment of losses for internal cases and will take any action necessary in respect of losses for external cases. This may include pursuing recovery through appropriate legal channels where the loss is considered substantial and further legal action may be necessary. Rising Voices Wessex would normally expect to recover costs in addition to losses.

9.4 In the case of recovery of an incorrect or ineligible payment, it may not be necessary to await the completion of an investigation before deciding whether or not recovery should take place. In all circumstances it would be reasonable to consider each situation on a case-by-case basis.

9.5 Any offence that generates proceeds is capable of attracting criminal confiscation. Assets recovery will be considered, where appropriate, either through the criminal process or civil courts.

## **10. Review of Fraud Response Plan**

10.1 The Fraud Response Plan will be reviewed annually or following an incident of fraud, bribery or serious irregularity to ensure that it reflects changes which may be necessary to strengthen future responses by Rising Voices Wessex, to such occurrences.

**Referral form for suspected fraud, bribery or serious irregularity**

Please e-mail to the Chair of the Trustees of the charity



**Date:**

**For the urgent attention of:**

**Details of person referring the concern:**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Location:**

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

**Is the referral as a result of allegations made by a Whistleblower? YES/NO**

**What is the background to the case? Please provide details of allegation / irregularity**

**Where discreet local enquiries have been undertaken, please provide details**

**If the case is related to grant funding, please provide details of all current funding and other sources (if known)**

**Detail any hard copy documents / attachments to be forwarded in support of this referral**