**Whistle Blowing**

The University of the West of England recognise that students registered on the Social Work degree have a duty to report concerns about any practice that they consider might be dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative. The university has a duty of care for students and it is important that they are enabled to voice their concerns and that their interests are safeguarded as far as possible.

* The responsibility of students, to raise serious concerns arising during placements or other practice learning and discussion of the difficulties involved forms an important part of their learning programme and includes reference to local agency policies and procedures. All agencies used for practice learning should have a whistle blowing policy and students should be provided with a copy in their induction. Students will be supported by the tutor to follow these. Where an agency does not have such a policy they will be encouraged by the practice learning co-ordinator to develop one.
* Each agency providing placements will identify a named person, in the student’s learning agreement, who is outside of the practice assessment process. The learning agreement must make clear how serious concerns will be dealt with and who in the agency may formally receive the concern. This would normally be a senior manager and the tutor and the student will consult with that person in order to decide the appropriate next step. When a serious concern does arise, students must discuss this with their tutor who will help students to consider the seriousness of the concern. Normally students should also discuss concerns with their practice educator or supervisor. Students should raise any concerns as soon as possible and not wait until the placement has ended.
* The tutor will ensure that the module leader, programme leader and named agency training representative are aware of any action being taken by the student. The agency should inform the tutor and the student of outcome of any investigation.
* If the programme leader is not satisfied with the way the concern has been managed or the outcome is inconsistent with known facts the university reserves the right to refer the matter directly to an appropriate higher authority.