

WBUK, The Biggest Threat to Whistleblowers

By Eileen Chubb@

This document is a response to WBUK and Georgina Halfords Halls continual threats and malicious attacks on the integrity of Eileen Chubb and Compassion in Care.

Background

The late Gavin MacFadyen the Director of the Charity (CIJ), The Centre for Investigative Journalism, approached Eileen Chubb to set up an organisation to support Whistle-blowers from sectors other than the care sector as Eileen was already working with whistle-blowers in that sector.

On the 20th of June 2012 Whistleblowers Uk (WBUK) was founded.

CIJ staff gave some administrative support to WBUK and a lawyer some pro bono time.

Eileen ran the WBUK helpline and a secure phone was provided and paid for by the CIJ.

Ian Foxley appointed himself chair at the first meeting and it quickly became apparent his agenda was pro bounty hunting.

Eileen had to write to Ian Foxley when she discovered that WBUK resources were being misappropriated by Mr Foxley.

Both Eileen and Gavin and other members made it clear that Ian Foxley should not issue Press statements that had not been agreed in advance, this was disregarded, and damaging statements were issued by Mr Foxley which did not represent the organisation.

Mr Foxley arranged to meet people claiming to represent WBUK without Gavin and Eileen's Knowledge for example Cathy James of PCAW.

It quickly became clear Mr Foxley was working to his own agenda ignoring all concerns raised about his conduct.

Eileen Resigned on October 14th, 2013 stating "*I realised that I was having to protect whistle-blowers from the chair of the organisation that was supposed to be helping them*"

Also, that WBUK due to Mr Foxley had developed a culture that was summed up by the attitude of: *What can whistle-blowers do for WBUK?* It should have been the other way around.

Gavin stayed on until 1st of June to tie up the loose ends where he could and resigned in a scathing public letter posted on the CIJ website.

Eileen and Given founded "The Whistler" Feb 2014 an organisation that has thrived helping genuine whistle-blowers from all sectors.

At this point I had never heard of Georgina Halford Hall and the first ever contact I had was an email from her wanting to speak to me, I called her, and she invited me to join a committee which I declined.

Due to the growing number of concerns we were receiving from whistle-blowers via the Compassion In Care and Whistler helpline, as well as queries about the legal status, finances, aims and actions of WBUK it became necessary to publish a formal statement that Compassion in Care and the Whistler had no connection with WBUK.

Compassion in Care received a letter from WBUK threatening legal action and demanding retraction of our statement, we refused and ignored the threat.

Further concerns about WBUK have been brought to our attention and reported to us include,

1. Dissolving WBUK and registering it as WBUK and unlawfully using the bank account of a dissolved Company.
2. A Tribunal judge recorded his concerns and questioned the legality of WBUK claiming costs as an unlicensed case management entity.
3. WBUK have repeatedly allowed the media to describe them as a charity despite the fact they have been refused charity status in the past.
4. Running a helpline with no phone number!!!! And failing to respond to whistle-blowers contacting them via email.
5. Georgina Halford Hall has falsely portrayed herself as a whistle-blower in a school case where there were genuine whistle-blowers using her influence to contain the facts about the genuine whistle-blowing in order to promote herself.
6. WBUK have given whistle-blowers confidential information to third parties without their permission and copied numerous other parties into confidential emails.
7. Whistleblowers have been promised assistance and when it became apparent there was no profit to be made from their cases, support was withdrawn.
8. Sir Norman Lamb MP resigned from The APPG on whistleblowing 24th oct 2019 because of the lack

of transparency and accountability of WBUK, who are the secretariat of this APPG.

9. The corporate funding of WBUK by the established Pro bounty US law firm Constantine Cannon and Navex Global who were both listed until very recently as generous funders of WBUK. Constantine Cannon also finance WBUK in their role as secretariat of the APPG.

10. We were receiving a large number of concerns from whistle-blowers who had been asked to sign what was effectively a case management agreement with WBUK, this contract was not on their website and put to individuals behind closed doors and involved whistle-blowers agreeing to pay WBUK an hourly rate for any assistance plus a percentage of any tribunal award. I was informed by the BEIS Department that I should refer this to the FCA, which I did. I had a response from the CEO Andrew Baily saying he had referred my concerns to the investigation department.

11. I was informed by a member of the public that WBUK had posted that the FCA were not investigating them or had ever investigated them, I published the Andrew Baily letter.

12. Following the publication of the book "There is no ME in Whistleblower" By Eileen Chubb, Eileen's publisher was sent a copy of a threatening letter from Coad Law, acting on behalf of WBUK, a letter which was allegedly sent to Eileen Chubb (but has never been received) fortunately the Publisher mentioned this or Eileen would never have been aware of it. Clearly

the intention of WBUK was to have Eileen's Book withdrawn from sale with malicious intent and on spurious grounds, that had Eileen been sent the letter she would have easily defended, hence the dirty trick of not informing her but instead approaching the publisher. The proceeds from the book sale were all to go the charity and this detriment is believed to be intended also.

13 Eileen responded to Coad law pointing out that she had not received the letter but had obtained a copy via her publisher and drew attention to the fact that all the information in the book about WBUK was accepted as they were only challenging the point they were under investigation by the FCA, Eileen provided evidence on that point and asked for WBUK to provide the Treasury Department letter they relied on. We heard no more and have yet to receive the Treasury letter WBUK allege exists.

14. Eileen contacted the solicitor's regulation Authority about Coad Law and was told they were not listed with the authority nor was there a landline or website for the company, therefore if Eileen wanted to complain about their dirty tactics, she needed to wait until she was unjustly sued by them.

15 Eileen challenged the report the APPG published, the evidence used by WBUK was not credible.

By this point we were receiving such a large volume of concerns via our helpline regarding WBUK, we felt duty bound to publish these concerns with the full consent of the individuals who offered signed witness statements.

On the **19th of November 2019** we published [The Misconduct Of WBUK](#) Part One. This report contained signed witness statements from whistle-blowers and independent witnesses and referred to 11 other whistle-blowers who wished to remain anonymous but who gave us evidence of WBUK exploitation to refer to in the report. We also referred to the fact that so many people had contacted us that the report would have to be published in two parts.

On 21st November 2019 Compassion in Care received a subject access request from Georgina Halford Hall asking for all information that referred to her.

Also, on this date WBUK changed its company registration details.

Please note that two days earlier we had made it public in the above report that we had other information on the misconduct of Halford Hall and WBUK for future publication. It is reasonable to assume this SAR request was motivated by the publication of both part one of our report and the intention to publish part two.

I responded to Halford Hall on 25th November 2019 asking her to confirm she was asking for information from whistle-blowers contacting our confidential helpline, which even if the names were redacted would identify those individuals.

Halford Hall had absolutely no reason to believe that Compassion In Care held any information on her with the exception of helpline information

given in confidence. Apart from one email and my telephone response as previously mentioned we have never had any contact with her other than the threats received. We have never sold her anything or asked her to fill in a survey, we have no information on her at all other than the information received from Whistleblowers in confidence in relation to her misconduct.

CIC received a letter from Halford Hall dated 29th November 2019, in response to the question, was she asking for confidential helpline information? and CIC viewed this as confirmation that was information she was asking for.

Prior to responding to Halford Hall Eileen telephoned the ICO on 8th of December 2019 and following their advice which directed us to their guidance that firstly providing Halford Hall with information given via a charity confidential helpline would breach the rights of others and that secondly because Eileen is an accredited journalist, our work came under special purposes. We replied to Halford Hall accordingly on the 9th of December 2019.

We discovered months later that Halford Hall had made a complaint to the ICO about Compassion in Care, now that we have obtained a copy of the complaint, we can prove beyond reasonable doubt that Halford Hall made this complaint with the intent of maliciously harming this charity and provided untruthful information to the ICO.

The ICO unfortunately did not inform us there was a complaint made against us, nor what evidence that complaint was based on and upheld the complaint made by Halford Hall based on her deliberately untruthful and malicious version.

We have a formal complaint lodged with the ICO, which can only be upheld as we were rightly

protecting the confidentiality of whistle-blowers and clearly Halford Hall was attempting to obtain their confidential information. The case officer meanwhile has said she was unaware of all the facts and can see now the detriment intended and caused by Halford Hall.

I had to make an FOI to obtain Halfords Halls complaint which is clearly libellous.

The following extracts are from Halford Halls complaint and I respond to each point in turn.

“The charity appears whether wilfully or otherwise to be ignorant of its responsibilities and obligations under GDPR and has used entirely spurious reasons to refuse to comply with the SAR”

My Reasons were explained fully and upholding the confidentiality of Whistleblowers is not spurious neither is the refusing to disclose a source, I never expected to have to defend such basic rights against the attack of an individual who alleges to campaign for Whistleblowers herself.

“Specifically, in the letter dated 9,12,19, Mrs Chubb states that “I am a journalist” and therefore claims exemption from GDPR. This SAR was not addressed to Ms Chubb personally, it was addressed to the registered Charity Compassion in Care”

“Journalism is not mentioned nor would I suggest is that a charitable purpose whether or not Mrs Chubb regards herself as a journalist as neither here nor there”

The work of Compassion in Care was first described as journalism by the chief inspector of England, working undercover, exposing abuse

publishing weekly news and research and revealing the facts about abuse. Writing books as well as contributing to books, magazines and journals.

Journalism is not our aim but is part of the process by which we achieve our aims. The accusation that we are in breach of our charitable aims by Halford Hall is clearly libellous and designed to smear and damage a track record that is beyond reproach.

“The charity should know perfectly well that in asking for the sources of data this is not a request for (as an example the names of individuals) or sources but a means of understanding how personal data is obtained this may be a further indication that the charity does not understand its responsibilities but it also suggests that is trying to avoid disclosing matters that might be embarrassing to it in any event even if some of the journalistic exemption relating to sources were in fact to apply which I do not for one moment except this would not prevent the disclosure of all the other requested information”

The words Some kind of journalistic exemption on disclosing sources, is not accepted in any way by Halford Hall and might be an acceptable ignorance in the average person but in the CEO of an alleged whistleblowing support organisation holding such a view it of grave concern.

Halford Hall is fully aware that all information about her has been obtained via the confidential helpline.

Whistleblowing and journalism are partners in free speech, any attack on one is attack on the other. Protection of sources is at the heart of Journalism; it is clearly a concept held in contempt by Halford Hall.

Those who contact this charity are doubly assured of confidentiality, firstly via the helpline pledge and secondly as a member of the NUJ I have sworn to uphold the protection of sources even in the face of threats of imprisonment.

The next libellous statement is even worse.

“At the same time, I draw your attention to a further issue raised by the charity’s response, it claims to be an organisation relieving distress and advancing education. On its website invites individuals to share their experiences. Given Mrs chubbs claimed to be a journalist it appears that the charity may be misusing data and information given to it confidence for journalistic purposes without this being disclosed to those who share their data with it. I request that the ICO also investigate this breach of GDPR”

This is yet another completely malicious and unfounded allegation, of course not upheld or investigated by the ICO at all as no there is no evidence whatsoever. For example, WBUK have recently spoken about alleged percentages of calls to their helpline in the media, is this breaching confidentiality or highlighting an issue? Halford Hall knows more than most it is highlighting an issue. For that reason, her prior and malicious allegations are the more libellous by their intent.

This Charity goes to extraordinary lengths to protect confidentiality, the same cannot be said of WBUK who have passed Whistleblowers details to lawyers without their consent and have copied numerous others into confidential emails on numerous occasions.

On the issue of describing us as “inviting people to share their experiences” we do no such thing, that is the mindset of an organisation that asks Whistleblowers to do something for them, we on the other hand run a helpline to support people.

This charity has a spotless record, Halford hall deliberately concealed the fact this charity was a thorn in the side of her organisation WBUK. She has made libellous allegations which we had no opportunity to defend ourselves against until we did an FOI to the ICO.

Most people are aware of our Covid crisis work and the 7 reports we have published so far, due to the disruption caused to our work by Halford Hall, our 8th report will not be published on Monday as planned but will be delayed until midweek. We sincerely apologise to those Whistleblowers who rely on our work to expose the issues that have caused them such injustice.

