

## **Whistleblowing Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This Policy outlines what you should do if you suspect something at work is putting you or others in danger or is illegal or unethical. Please note that this Policy does not refer to any safeguarding concerns and you should refer to the relevant Safeguarding Policy and any whistleblowing relevant to the provision of care by the Company should be dealt with in line with that Policy.
- 1.2. This Policy applies to our employees, workers, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns.
- 1.3. This Policy does not form part of your contract with us. We reserve the right to amend or remove this Policy.
- 1.4. For all employees based at Head Office please note that where the Branch Manager is referred to this will be a Director of the Company.
- 1.5. We reserve the right to engage an independent third party to assist at any stage of the whistleblowing policy procedure.

### **2. What is whistleblowing?**

- 2.1. Whistleblowing is the name given to the reporting of certain types of wrongdoing by people who work for us. This will usually, although not always, be something you have seen or noticed at work. We aim to maintain high standards of integrity in everything we do. However, all organisations can occasionally be affected by conduct that is dangerous, against the law or that breaches ethical or professional codes. We will take your concerns seriously; they will be thoroughly investigated, and you can be confident there will be no reprisals.
- 2.2. The types of concerns you may want to 'blow the whistle' about include any activity which you suspect:
  - a Is criminal
  - b Shows a failure to comply with any legal, professional or regulatory obligation
  - c Poses a danger to health and safety

- d May damage the environment
  - e May breach of our Bribery Policy
  - f May facilitate tax evasion
  - g Shows financial fraud or mismanagement or the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters
- 2.3. Genuine concerns raised in relation to any of the above are likely to amount to whistleblowing. If you are not sure whether something you wish to raise is covered by this Policy, then speak to your Branch Manager or the HR team who will be able to provide guidance.

### **3. What you should do if you have a complaint but are not 'blowing the whistle'**

- 3.1. If you have a complaint or issue which does not fall into the categories listed above or relates to a personal matter, then these should generally be raised using our Grievance Policy. If your complaint relates to the conduct of others towards you, then you should also refer to our Bullying & Harassment Policy.

### **4. How to raise a whistleblowing concern**

- 4.1. You should usually raise a whistleblowing concern with your Branch Manager. This can be done informally and does not need to be done in writing. Your Branch Manager can provide advice regarding appropriate next steps. If the matter involves your Branch Manager or if the concern you wish to raise is very serious, then you should proceed immediately to the more formal process set out below.
- 4.2. If the matter is not or cannot be resolved informally, you should put your concern in writing and send it to a Director of the Company or the HR team. This can be done either by letter or by email. You should state that you are raising a concern under the Whistleblowing Policy. Include as much information in your correspondence as possible, including facts, events, dates, times and the people involved.
- 4.3. We will hold a meeting with you to discuss the issues you have raised. You are entitled to be accompanied at this meeting, and any other meetings held under this Policy, by

a work colleague or trade union representative. You (and your companion, if appropriate) may be asked to keep the matter confidential whilst an investigation takes place.

- 4.4. We will investigate your concerns in full. We will keep you informed of our progress insofar as we can, but there may be elements which we decide should remain confidential.
- 4.5. We will confirm the outcome of our investigation to you insofar as we can. If you are dissatisfied with the process in any way, then you can raise this with Ryan Godwin.

## **5. Confidentiality**

- 5.1. We discourage you from making anonymous disclosures as they are very difficult for us to investigate. We can't properly establish whether allegations are credible without being able to ask you for more details or clarification, and this makes it hard to reach an informed decision.
- 5.2. We will protect anyone who blows the whistle in good faith, even if we do not agree that the allegations they raise are correct. You should feel able to openly raise issues with us under this Policy. However, we understand that the subject matter covered by whistleblowing can be sensitive. If you are concerned about possible reprisals, whether from colleagues or others, you should tell the HR team who will be able to provide you with appropriate support and reassurance.
- 5.3. The sensitive nature of whistleblowing investigations means that, aside from those involved in the whistleblowing process set out above, we will try to keep your personal involvement confidential. There may be circumstances where we cannot do this, and in those circumstances, we will discuss the matter with you to explain our position.

## **6. External disclosures**

- 6.1. This Policy outlines the process for raising, investigating and resolving wrongdoing in the workplace. It is rarely necessary – or, from our point of view, desirable – for anyone outside the business to become involved when a whistleblowing allegation is made.
- 6.2. In some exceptional circumstances, you may decide to go to an external body – an industry regulator, for example. That might be the case if you believe, for example,

that someone senior is involved in a cover-up – but again, it is better to raise the matter internally first. The independent charity Protect (see contact details below) can direct you towards the appropriate regulator for the type of issue you want to raise.

- 6.3. This Policy covers the actions of third parties such as suppliers, service providers and clients, as well as those of our staff. Should you have concerns about a third party, you are encouraged to raise them with us before approaching anyone else. The HR team will be able to explain how you should proceed.
- 6.4. Telling the media about a concern – particularly before or during an internal investigation – is almost never justified or appropriate in any situation. We strongly discourage you from doing so, and we will treat any such contact with the press as a serious disciplinary issue justifying dismissal unless exceptional circumstances exist. We would normally expect you to have taken all reasonable steps to deal with the matter internally or with an external regulator and to have taken full advice from a lawyer or from Protect (see contact details below) before being justified in approaching the press.

## **7. Protection for whistleblowers**

- 7.1. If you raise genuine concerns under this Policy, even if you turn out to be mistaken, we will support you and you will not face any action as a result.
- 7.2. We will not dismiss you, or treat you less well, because you've blown the whistle in accordance with this Policy.
- 7.3. You must not treat others badly if they have raised concerns under this Policy, nor must you threaten them in any way. If you do, you may face disciplinary action which could include dismissal for gross misconduct. The whistleblower may also be able to bring legal action against you.
- 7.4. If you believe that you have been treated badly in any way after having raised a whistleblowing concern with us, then you should raise this matter with the HR team and/or raise a grievance under our Grievance Policy.

## **8. Abuse of this Policy**

- 8.1. All whistleblowers must act in good faith. If we believe that you have raised issues under this Policy – which you knew were untrue – in bad faith or maliciously, then we

will deal with this as a disciplinary matter under our Disciplinary Policy. You may be subject to sanctions up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

## **9. Useful links and contacts**

9.1. The following policies contain additional information and may be relevant:

- a Disciplinary Policy
- b Bribery Policy
- c Grievance Policy
- d Bullying & Harassment Policy

9.2. You can get further advice on whistleblowing, confidentiality, and protection from reprisals at <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>. Protect is an independent charity that also offers an advice line (020 3117 2520).

## **10. Administration of the Whistleblowing Policy**

10.1. The HR team is responsible for the administration of the Whistleblowing Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact Resolute HR.