

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Employees and workers who make public disclosures, generally about wrong doings in the workplace, are commonly referred to as “whistleblowers”.

Under certain circumstances “whistleblowers” are protected under legislation for disclosing information that is known as “qualifying”. A qualifying disclosure must relate to:

- committing a criminal offence
- failing to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- endangering the health and safety of an individual
- environmental damage
- concealing any information relating to the above.

All employees are legally protected if they make a qualifying disclosure relating to any of the above points.

Anyone wishing to make a disclosure is strongly recommended to raise the issue with your manager in the first instance so that, where appropriate, there is an opportunity to address the area of concern.

Where the complaint is serious, for example involving fraud, theft or another potential gross misconduct by an employee, the whistleblower should act quickly to report it but should not mention it to the subject of the complainant or other colleagues as this could affect the investigatory process. The timescales for handling disclosures will differ depending on the nature of the disclosure made but all disclosures (whether formal or informal) will normally be acknowledged within 2 working days.

Investigation

The manager will arrange an investigation into the matter either by investigating the matter themselves or immediately passing the issue to an appropriate person (except where they are the subject of the disclosure where an alternative suitable person will be appointed). The investigation may involve the whistle-blower and other individuals involved giving a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out promptly and confidentially.

If a whistleblower wishes to remain anonymous this should be raised with the person to whom the initial disclosure is made. In some cases, this may be possible but in more serious cases where disciplinary action may have to be taken against others this may be more difficult. The Business is committed to protecting the well-being of the whistleblower whilst this policy is followed.

The whistleblower’s statement (where available) will be taken into account, and he/she will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. The person responsible for the investigation may ask the whistleblower to attend a meeting to gather all the information needed to ensure a clear understanding of the situation.

Where a meeting is held, the whistleblower may be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague if they wish and where possible the dates/times will be agreed to facilitate this, or in the case of a third party, by an appropriate person (e.g. friend, family, colleague). Legal professionals will not normally be allowed to attend such meetings.

Issue No:	8
Issue Date:	September 2024
No of Pages:	Page 1 of 3
Document Ref:	DLS – WBP 01

Outcome of the investigation

The person who carried out the investigation will take any necessary action, which may include reporting the matter to relevant managers within the Business and/or an appropriate prescribed body (if this has not already taken place).

On conclusion of any investigation, the whistleblower will be told the outcome of the investigation (in as much detail as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances) and what action is to be taken or is proposed. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

Where a concern is raised anonymously the Business will not ordinarily be able to provide feedback to the whistleblower and any action taken as a result of an anonymous disclosure may be limited. The Business will take all appropriate steps to investigate such a disclosure in line with the level of information provided. If an anonymous whistleblower wishes to seek feedback from the business an appropriate anonymised email address should be provided.

Further action

Where having raised an initial concern and the whistleblower has a genuine belief that the Business has failed to take appropriate action or investigate the issue properly and they wish to pursue the matter further, they may report their concern to another relevant person in the Business or to an appropriate prescribed body (if this has not already been reported).

This person may arrange for further investigation to be carried out, make any necessary further enquiries and/or make their own report. On the conclusion of any further investigation, they will take appropriate action which may include reporting the matter to a prescribed body if this has not taken place at an earlier stage in the process.

Concerns raised by member of the public

Where complaints are received from members of the public, the Business's formal complaints procedure will be followed, unless the complaint relates to the specific conduct or performance of an individual employee/worker in which case the Disciplinary Procedure may need to be instigated.

Criminal issues/fraud

In the event of the allegation being of a very serious nature, for example relating to a fraud or other potential gross misconduct offence, there may be a need to involve the Business's auditors and/or the police or other appropriate authorities. This should normally be agreed initially by Managing Director of the Board who should, in turn, and where appropriate, will keep these other authorities informed.

Protecting 'whistleblowers'

Any whistleblowers who make protected disclosures in line with this procedure have the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because they have made a disclosure. This means continued employment and opportunities for promotion or training will not be affected because the whistleblower has raised a legitimate concern.

Whistleblowers should report any harassment or victimisation to an appropriate manager as soon as practicable. The Business will take all reasonable steps to prevent/address such harassment or victimisation. Victimisation of a whistleblower for making a protected disclosure will be considered a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the Business's Discipline and Dismissal Procedure.

Issue No:	8
Issue Date:	September 2024
No of Pages:	Page 2 of 3
Document Ref:	DLS – WBP 01

Whistleblowers may find the process of reporting an issue/wrongdoing difficult and uncomfortable. The Business will take all reasonable steps to support the whistleblower which may include access to an external counselling service. The whistleblower may also be referred to the charity Protect (previously known as Public Concern at Work) <https://protect-advice.org.uk/> for information and advice.

Malicious allegations/disclosures

If, following appropriate investigation, it is considered that an employee has made a malicious allegation without real substance and/or which could not be reasonably considered to be in the public interest, this will be taken as a serious matter and may potentially lead to disciplinary action in line with the Business's Discipline and Dismissal Procedure.

Where other individuals engaged by the Business make a malicious allegation, the Business will investigate the allegation thoroughly and take appropriate action, which may include terminating the contract/arrangements with the individual. If disciplinary action is required, the person who carried out the investigation will report the matter to a relevant manager to start the disciplinary procedure. If a third party has made a malicious allegation the board may take legal advice about steps open to it where appropriate.

Data Protection

When an individual makes a disclosure, the Business will process any personal data collected in accordance with its Data Protection Policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the disclosure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

Where an employee wishes to make a disclosure that concerns a matter that cannot be dealt with through the above procedure, it should be raised with the Managing Director *Protect*, an independent whistleblowing charity based at 3rd Floor, Bank Chambers, 6 - 10 Borough High Street, London SE1 9QQ (0207 404 6609).

Protect is a registered Charity No.1025557. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England No. 2849833. Registered office at The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9DA.

Name: Tristan Miles

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Tristan Miles".

Appointment: Managing Director

Date: 1st September 2026

Next Review Date: 1st September 2027

Issue No:	8
Issue Date:	September 2024
No of Pages:	Page 3 of 3
Document Ref:	DLS – WBP 01