
Whistleblowing Policy – Raising Concerns

Controlled document

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Target audience	All Practice Plus Group Customers, Employees and Other Stakeholders

1. Introduction

All of us at one time or another experience concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these are easily resolved. However, when the concern feels serious because it is about patient or service user welfare, clinical malpractice, health and safety or a possible fraud that might affect others or the organisation itself, it can be difficult to know what to do.

You may be worried about raising such a concern and may think it best to keep it to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or to the organisation. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

The Directors of the Company are committed to running the organisation in the best way possible and to do so we need your help. This policy is designed to reassure you that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and to enable you to raise any concern you may have about the issues mentioned above at an early stage and in the right way. Rather than wait for proof, we would prefer you to raise the matter when it is still a concern.

This policy applies to all those who work for us; whether full-time or part-time, self-employed contractor, as an agency worker, bank worker or as a volunteer. If you have a whistleblowing concern, please let us know.

If something is troubling you that you think we should know about or look into, please use this policy. Such concerns might be to do with:

- Physical Abuse or neglect of customers or employees
- Criminal activity
- Failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirement
- A Health & Safety Risk to the public or employees
- Bribery
- Financial fraud or mismanagement
- Negligence
- Conduct likely to damage the reputation of the Company
- Unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
- Other unethical conduct
- The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters

If, however, you wish to make a complaint about your employment or how you have been treated, please use the following Company documents:

- Grievance Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Anti-Corruption Policy

These are all located on the Company intranet or they can be obtained from your manager or human resources department.

This Whistleblowing Policy is primarily for concerns where the public interest is at risk, which includes a risk to the wider public, patients, service users and staff, or to the organisation itself.

If in doubt – please raise it!

2. Our Assurances To You

2.1. Your Safety

The Directors of the Company are committed to this policy. Provided you are raising a genuine concern, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course we cannot extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue.

If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of reprisal as a result. We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern and we consider it a disciplinary matter to victimise anyone who has raised a genuine concern.

2.2. Your Confidence

With these assurances, we hope you will raise your concern openly. However, we recognise that there may be circumstances when you would prefer to speak to someone in confidence first. If this is the case, please say so at the outset. If you ask us not to disclose your identity, we will not do so without your consent unless required by law. You should understand that there may be times when we are unable to resolve a concern without revealing your identity, for example, where your personal evidence is essential. In such cases, we will discuss with you whether and how the matter can best proceed.

Please remember that if you do not tell us who you are (and therefore you are raising a concern anonymously) it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter. We will not be able to protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, you should not assume we can provide the assurances we offer in the same way if you report a concern anonymously.

If you are unsure about raising a concern you can get independent advice from Protect (see contact details under Independent Advice).

3. How To Raise A Concern

Please remember that you do not need to have firm evidence of malpractice before raising a concern. However, we do ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern.

3.1. Step One: Your Manager

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your manager or team leader. This may be done verbally or in writing.

3.2 Step Two: Divisional Contacts

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with:

Division	Name of contact	Contact details
Secondary Care	Jason Riley HR Director	Mobile: <input type="text" value="DPA"/> <input type="text" value="DPA"/>
	Lesley Boler Chief Nurse and Lead for patient care, quality and governance	Mobile: <input type="text" value="DPA"/> <input type="text" value="DPA"/>
Health in Justice	Louise Batchelor Head of HR	Mobile: <input type="text" value="DPA"/> <input type="text" value="DPA"/>
	Maggie Wood, Director of Nursing and Quality	Mobile: <input type="text" value="DPA"/> <input type="text" value="DPA"/>
Integrated Urgent Health Care & New Services	Kelly Mance Head of HR	Mobile: <input type="text" value="DPA"/> <input type="text" value="DPA"/>
	Kate Carter, Director of Nursing and Professions, Executive Safeguarding Lead and PREVENT	Mobile: <input type="text" value="DPA"/> <input type="text" value="DPA"/>

These people have been given special responsibility and training in dealing with whistleblowing concerns. If you want to raise the matter in confidence, please say so at the outset so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

4. Independent Advice

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want confidential advice at any stage, you may contact the independent charity Protect Advice Line on or by email at whistle@protect-advice.org.uk. They can talk you

through your options and help you raise a concern about malpractice at work. Their website address is **www.protect-advice.org.uk**

5. How We Will Handle The Matter

Once you have told us of your concern, we will acknowledge it within 5 working days, assess it and consider what action may be appropriate. This may involve an informal review, an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who will be handling the matter, how you can contact them, what further assistance we may need from you and agree a timetable for feedback. If you ask, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it. If we have misunderstood the concern or there is any information missing please let us know.

When you raise the concern it will be helpful to know how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If we think your concern falls more appropriately within our grievance, dignity at work or other relevant procedure, we will let you know.

Whenever possible, we will give you feedback on the outcome of any investigation. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you about the precise actions we take where this would infringe a duty of confidence we owe to another person.

While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will strive to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy you will help us to achieve this.

If at any stage you experience reprisal, harassment or victimisation for raising a genuine concern contact your HR team or any of the contacts listed in 3.2.

6. External Contacts

While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise your concern internally with us, we recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report a concern to an outside body. In fact, we would rather you raised a matter with the appropriate regulator – such as those listed in the table below – than not at all. Protect (point 4 above) will be able to advise you on such an option if you wish.

Regulator/Supervisory body	Address
Care Quality Commission – regulates adult social and health care in England: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• http://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us• Phone: DPA• Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk	Care Quality Commission Citygate Gallowgate Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA

<p><u>Ofsted</u> – regulates education and care services for children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us/whistleblower-hotline • Phone: DPA • Email: whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk 	<p>WBHL Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD</p>
<p><u>Health and Safety Executive (HSE)</u> - regulates and enforces workplace health, safety and welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/concerns.htm • HSE Complaints and Advisory Team • DPA in office hours 	<p><u>HSE offices</u></p>
<p><u>Care Inspectorate</u> – regulates all care services in Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.careinspectorate.com/index.php/complaints • Phone: DPA • Email: concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot 	<p>Care Inspectorate Compass House 11 Riverside Drive Dundee DD1 4NY</p>
<p><u>Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland</u> – monitors services for service users with mental illnesses or learning disabilities in Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mwcscot.org.uk/contact-us/ • Advice line (Freephone for service users and careers): DPA • Advice line (For professionals): DPA • Email: enquiries@mwscot.org.uk 	<p>Thistle House 91 Haymarket Terrace Edinburgh EH12 5 HE</p>
<p><u>Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)</u> – regulates social care services in Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone: DPA • Email: CIW@gov.wales 	<p>CSSIW National Office Welsh Government Rhydycar Business Park Merthyr Tydfil CF48 1UZ</p>

Or if there is a complaint against a person who is a member of a professional body, you could inform:

- The Health and Care Professions Council registers arts therapists, biomedical scientists, chiropodists / podiatrists, clinical scientists, dieticians, hearing aid dispensers, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, paramedics, physiotherapists, practitioner psychologists, prosthetists / orthotists, radiographers and speech and language therapists.
- The Scottish Social Care Council registers all people who work in social services in Scotland
- The General Medical Council registers all doctors.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council registers nurses and midwives.
- The General Dental Council registers dentists, dental nurses, dental technicians and orthodontic therapists.

- The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain registers pharmacists and their premises.
- Social Work England (www.socialworkengland.org.uk) for social workers based in England only.

7. Non-whistleblowing Issues

As noted above, whistleblowing is the raising of a concern where others, or the organisation itself, are at risk. However, should you wish to raise an issue that concerns yourself there are a number of ways that you can do this.

7.1. HR Policies

The Company has the following documents that you should refer to:

- Dignity at Work Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Anti-Corruption Policy

These policies are available via the Company intranet, from your manager or from your human resources department.

7.2. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

We subscribe to an EAP provided by [Health Assured](#). Should you have personal issues such as a personal or family crisis, illness, retirement issues, or managing money problems, then Health Assured can offer expert advice, invaluable information, specialist counselling and support.

- Call the free Health Assured 24-hour personal helpline on DPA in strictest confidence or access information via the internet www.healthassuredeap.co.uk

Equality Impact Assessment Statement

		Yes/No	Comments
1.	Does the policy/guidance affect one group less or more favourably than another on the basis of:		
	Race	No	
	Ethnic origins	No	
	Nationality	No	
	Gender	No	
	Culture	No	
	Religion or belief	No	
	Sexual orientation including lesbian, gay and bisexual people	No	
	Age	No	

		Yes/No	Comments
	Disability - learning disabilities, physical disability, sensory impairment and mental health problems	No	
2.	Is there any evidence that some groups are affected differently?	No	
3.	If you have identified potential discrimination, are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
4.	Is the impact of the policy/guidance likely to be negative?	No	
5.	If so can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
6.	What alternatives are there to achieving the policy/guidance without the impact?	N/A	
7.	Can we reduce the impact by taking different action?	N/A	