



## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY & PROCEDURE

### Introduction

Whistleblowing is the name given to the act of the disclosure of information to an employer or relevant authority by an individual who knows, or suspects, that the Company is responsible for, or has taken part in, some wrongdoing.

### Qualifying disclosures

Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as “qualifying disclosures”. A “qualifying disclosure” means a disclosure of information that an individual genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the Company has committed a “relevant failure” by:

- 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; or
- concealing any information relating to the above.

These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. The Company will take any concerns that its employees may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who ‘blow the whistle’ where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur. The disclosure has to be, “in the public interest”. We encourage employees to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

Should the concern not meet the requirement to be a qualifying disclosure and/or concerns relate to a personal grievance, the matter will be addressed under the Grievance Policy & Procedure.

### Procedure

In the first instance employees should report any concerns they may have to their manager, or a director or the People Team where the concern relates to the

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manager (or it is not appropriate to report the matter to their manager). All concerns reported will be treated in the utmost confidence.

Employees may be asked to confirm any verbal concerns in writing. Following receipt of a disclosure made under this policy, an investigation meeting will be held. The purpose of this meeting is to gather as much information as possible from the employee regarding their concerns, including whether there is any supporting evidence or witnesses that may assist the investigation.

After this meeting, the investigating manager will commence a full investigation into the concerns raised. The investigation will aim to gather all relevant information including relevant documentary evidence or witness statements.

Once the investigation is complete, the investigating manager will write to the employee confirming the outcome.

Employees who are not satisfied with the explanation or outcome may raise the matter with a more senior manager or the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body e.g. HMRC, HSE, Environment Agency. We strongly encourage employees to seek advice before reporting a concern to an external agency. Protect operates a confidential helpline and offers online resources (<https://protect-advice.org.uk/>).

## **Formal action**

Should formal action be required as a result of any disclosure made under this policy, this action will be carried out in accordance with the applicable internal policy. Any potential sanctions imposed will be fair and reasonable in line with the relevant policy.

## **Protection against detrimental treatment**

Everyone who makes a qualifying disclosure under this policy are protected against detrimental treatment, up to and including dismissal.

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Amendments to this policy**

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended from time-to-time in line with changes to legislation and best practice.