### ***EXAMPLE***

### **Whistleblowing Policy**

#### **1. Policy Statement**

Our company is committed to maintaining the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and transparency in all its practices. This Whistleblowing Policy provides a clear process for employees to report illegal, unethical, or improper conduct within the organisation. The policy ensures that employees can raise concerns without fear of retaliation, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

#### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and temporary workers within the organisation. It covers concerns about misconduct, illegal activities, breaches of company policy, or unethical practices that may affect the company, its employees, clients, or stakeholders.

#### **3. What is Whistleblowing?**

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting serious concerns about wrongdoing within the organisation. This may include but is not limited to:

* **Criminal activity**: Fraud, theft, corruption, or bribery.
* **Health and safety violations**: Actions that endanger employees or the public.
* **Environmental damage**: Breaches of environmental law or regulations.
* **Failure to comply with legal obligations**: Breach of law, regulations, or policies.
* **Miscarriage of justice**: Actions that result in an unfair or unjust outcome.
* **Covering up wrongdoing**: Attempts to conceal any of the above.

This policy does not cover personal grievances, such as disputes about employment terms or interpersonal conflicts, which should be addressed through the company’s grievance procedures.

#### **4. Legal Protection**

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, employees who make a qualifying disclosure are legally protected from dismissal, harassment, or other forms of retaliation. To qualify for protection, the whistleblower must:

* **Have a reasonable belief** that the information they are disclosing is true.
* **Raise the concern in the public interest**, meaning it affects others, not just the individual raising the concern.

Disclosures made in bad faith, maliciously, or for personal gain will not be protected under this law, and employees may face disciplinary action in such cases.

#### **5. How to Raise a Concern**

Employees who become aware of wrongdoing should raise their concerns as soon as possible. Concerns can be reported through the following channels:

* **Immediate Line Manager**: Where appropriate, the concern should be raised with the employee’s direct manager.
* **HR Department**: If the employee feels uncomfortable discussing the matter with their manager, they can contact the Human Resources department.
* **Whistleblowing Officer**: The company has a designated Whistleblowing Officer who can be contacted for serious or sensitive concerns.

Concerns can be raised verbally or in writing, and employees are encouraged to provide as much information as possible to facilitate a thorough investigation.

#### **6. Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The company is committed to protecting the identity of whistleblowers and treating disclosures in confidence. However, in some cases, it may not be possible to maintain complete confidentiality (e.g., if legal proceedings require the disclosure of the whistleblower's identity). In such cases, the employee will be informed before their identity is revealed.

Employees may choose to make disclosures anonymously, but this may limit the company’s ability to investigate the concern thoroughly.

#### **7. Investigation Process**

Once a concern has been raised, the company will:

* Acknowledge receipt of the concern within five working days.
* Conduct an initial assessment to determine the severity and credibility of the disclosure.
* Appoint an investigator or investigation team to conduct a full investigation if warranted.
* Ensure the investigation is conducted fairly, impartially, and as quickly as possible.
* Maintain regular communication with the whistleblower to update them on the investigation’s progress, where appropriate.

If the investigation confirms wrongdoing, the company will take appropriate corrective action, which may include disciplinary measures, legal action, or other appropriate remedies.

#### **8. Protection from Retaliation**

The company is committed to protecting employees who report concerns in good faith. Retaliation, harassment, or victimisation of whistleblowers is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

Employees who believe they have been subjected to retaliation after raising a concern should report the matter to HR or the Whistleblowing Officer. The company will take all complaints of retaliation seriously and will investigate and resolve them accordingly.

#### **9. False or Malicious Allegations**

Employees are protected when they raise concerns in good faith, even if their concerns are ultimately found to be incorrect. However, making allegations with malicious intent or knowingly providing false information is a serious offence and may result in disciplinary action.

#### **10. External Disclosures**

In most cases, employees are encouraged to raise concerns internally through the channels outlined in this policy. However, if an employee believes the company has failed to address their concern properly or if the concern is particularly serious, they may make an external disclosure to:

* **Prescribed persons or bodies**: Such as regulatory authorities (e.g., Health and Safety Executive, Financial Conduct Authority) who are designated to receive whistleblowing disclosures.
* **Legal professionals**: If the employee seeks legal advice regarding their concern.
* **Media or other external bodies**: In exceptional circumstances, if the employee reasonably believes the issue has not been, or will not be, addressed by internal or regulatory bodies and in the disclosure is in the public interest.

Employees are advised to seek legal advice before making any external disclosures to ensure they remain protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

#### **11. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and complies with current UK laws and best practices. The company will monitor the number and nature of concerns raised to ensure the whistleblowing process is working effectively and to address any underlying issues that may arise.

#### **12. Training and Awareness**

All employees will receive training on the whistleblowing process during their induction, and regular refresher courses will be provided to ensure awareness of this policy. Managers will receive specific training on how to handle whistleblowing disclosures appropriately and how to ensure that whistleblowers are protected from retaliation.

This Whistleblowing Policy aligns with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and ensures that employees are fully informed of their rights and the process for reporting misconduct without fear of retaliation.