



# Whistleblowing policy

The purpose of this Policy is to encourage Workers to report any concerns or malpractice and to facilitate a more open and honest working environment. People who raise issues of concern will be treated with respect and will be assured that the matter will be properly investigated, and the necessary steps taken.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “Worker” refers to any person(s) employed by the Company, whether under a contract of employment, or any other contract where that person undertakes to, personally, do any work or services.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (the ‘Whistleblowing Act’) provides statutory protection against dismissal and victimisation for workers who speak out about genuine concerns in the workplace.

Workers who report issues of concern will be protected from harassment, victimisation, dismissal or any other reprisal or detriment as a result of reporting their concern unless it is later proved that the information provided by the worker was false to his or her knowledge.

For a disclosure to be protected, the Worker must reasonably believe that the disclosure is being made in the public interest and fits within the definition of Qualifying Disclosure.

A ‘Qualifying Disclosure’ includes the reporting of information where it relates to a breach of legal obligations, health & safety issues, a criminal offence (which has occurred or might occur), a report of harassment/bullying or discrimination, damage to the environment or a miscarriage of justice.

Typical examples of ‘Qualifying Disclosures’ are:

- An employee reporting a colleague for downloading pornographic material from the internet.
- An employee reporting a personal expenses fraud by other employees.
- Following a break-in, an employee reporting conversations that suggest the break-in was just a smoke screen, organised by another employee, to conceal stock losses.
- Health & Safety breaches likely to pose a risk to the welfare of others.
- The illegal dumping by the Company of construction waste.

If you are unsure whether your report can be considered a Qualifying Disclosure or you would like independent advice at any stage, you may contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609. Alternatively, employees may contact our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for assistance. Details of our EAP provider are available on MyReward.

## **Procedure**

If a Worker wishes to raise a concern they should do so in the first instance with their immediate line manager or, if that is not appropriate, with a more senior manager within the Company. In the event that a Worker does not wish to raise an issue with local management for whatever reason they may contact a member of the Group HR Department or the Company Secretary.

If a Worker would feel more comfortable discussing their concerns with either a male or female manager, the business will ensure that this opportunity is given.

If a Worker feels unable to raise an issue with local or Group management, they may contact our whistleblowing hotline 24/7 on **0800 068 9449** or online via a dedicated website at <http://www.crestnicholson.ethicspoint.com/>.

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Our whistleblowing hotline is run by Navex Global, an anonymous, confidential and free telephone service that enables Workers to report their concerns about theft, fraud or other suspected wrongdoing in the workplace.

Once a concern has been raised, the Company Secretary and the HR Director will be informed. Following their advice, the Company will either (i) investigate the allegations of wrong-doing itself, or (ii) refer the matter to others for investigation.

To aid the procedure, a 'Qualifying Disclosure' Report can be completed by the person to whom the report has been made and forwarded to the Company Secretary on completion. The Company Secretary will assess the nature of the disclosure and, where appropriate, ensure the relevant people or organisations are notified.

On raising a concern the Company will ensure that the Worker knows:

- How and by whom the concern will be handled
- How long the investigation will take
- The outcome of the investigation, where appropriate
- That they are entitled to independent advice

If, having reported a matter, a Worker does not believe that it is being appropriately dealt with, they should follow the Company's grievance procedure contained within the Company Grievance Policy.

If the matter is still not resolved once the above steps have been followed, or in an emergency, the Worker should report the matter to an appropriate outside body (such as the Health & Safety Executive or Environment Agency).

So long as the Worker genuinely believes the information they are reporting is true and is made in the public interest, the Company will treat all such reports with respect and will protect the Worker from any unfair treatment, whether or not their report is eventually proved to be correct. If a Worker believes they are being subjected to unfair treatment in connection with a report, they should raise a complaint using the normal grievance procedure.

Any Worker found to be victimising or harassing any other employee, or otherwise subjecting them to any reprisals as a result of having made a report, may be subject to disciplinary action.

Depending on the seriousness of the case, an act of reprisal may be viewed as an act of gross misconduct and may lead to summary dismissal.

The making of mischievous, malicious, unfair or vexatious reports will also be classed as misconduct under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure and might result in the dismissal of those concerned.

Any report should be made to a more senior employee or manager of the Group according to the reporting lines set out in the 'Procedure' section.

All managers are responsible for ensuring that all allegations are dealt with promptly and that Workers who raise the allegation are treated fairly and are not penalised in any way (except in the case of the making of vexatious reports, as outlined above).

In the interests of the health & safety of other employees, customers and visitors, all Workers are responsible for reporting any apparent wrong-doing in the workplace by following the procedures set out above.

In certain situations Workers may ask to remain anonymous. The Company will keep that Worker's identity confidential unless disclosure is required by law or consent is given by the Worker.

**June 2018**

*The Audit and Risk Committee will monitor the effectiveness of this Policy, and will review it on a regular basis, annually as a minimum.*