



Whistle Blowing Policy



1. Introduction

Skills People Group consists of the following companies.

- *Construction Skills People*
- *C&G Assessments and Training Ltd*
- *Training Futures UK Ltd.*

We have both a grievance procedure and a bullying and harassment procedure in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment.

The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover other serious concerns which fall with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. We are committed to running our business with honesty and integrity and within the restraints of the law whilst upholding the reputation of the Company and maintaining public confidence. As such whilst legislation protects you from suffering a detriment at work if you take a matter to a relevant outside body, we would hope that you would feel able to bring any concerns you may have to the attention of your Line Manager with confidence that any such concern would be dealt with appropriately and swiftly and without any fear of reprisal, even if your belief of wrongdoing turns out to be unfounded as the result of a thorough investigation.

Whistle Blowing is the everyday term used to describe a disclosure made to someone in authority alleging corruption, malpractice or wrongdoing on the part of another person. In employment whistle blowing refers to an employee (“whistle blower”) making a disclosure about a colleagues conduct in the course of employment, or about employer’s practices

2. Overview

The policy makes it clear that any employee working with the Company can report malpractice without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This whistle-blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' externally in the first instance.

This policy is intended to supplement, and to be read in conjunction with and not replace, the existing Company policies and procedures on Grievance, Disciplinary and Anti Bribery, Fraud & Conflict of Interest and Malpractice & Maladministration Policies.

3. Whistle Blowing Policy

The Legal Position

Employees and workers who make a ‘protected disclosure’ are protected from being treated badly or being dismissed as a result of making the disclosure. The Act offers protection to any person who makes a disclosure relating to the following serious offences: -

- criminal offences,
- risks to health and safety,
- failure to comply with a legal obligation,
- a miscarriage of justice
- environmental damage

deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above five matters

For a disclosure to be protected it must be made to an appropriate body. For example, disclosing a

health and safety issue to the Health and Safety Executive is likely to be protected, but not if the concern was disclosed to the media. The raising of a concern will be covered by this policy provided you have a reasonable belief that the disclosure is made in the public interest and is made in good faith.

Procedure

We are committed to the highest possible standards of operation. In line with that commitment the company encourage all employees, to consider raising the matter with the HR Manager or Line Manager before taking the matter to an outside body.

Concerns should be raised by the discloser in writing to their Line Manager and subsequently the HR Manager and should provide as much supporting evidence as possible about the disclosure along with the grounds for the belief of malpractice. The individual raising the concern must declare any personal interest they have in the matter. We will take all such concerns seriously and any individual raising legitimate concerns under this policy will not be subjected to any detriment either during or after employment. All such concerns raised will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action taken accordingly.

Safeguarding Complaints

We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make and we will support you during the process. We will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern to us in good faith.

Every effort will be made to keep the identity of the whistle blower who makes a disclosure under this policy confidential, at least until a formal investigation is under way. In order to ensure that a fair investigation can take place, the whistle blower will also be expected to keep the fact that they have raised a concern, the nature of the concern and the identity of those involved confidential. It may be that during an investigation, disciplinary or legal proceedings that the company no longer maintains the whistle blower's confidentiality. If that does occur, then the company will endeavor to notify the whistle blower in advance.

Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation maliciously, vexatious, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you and, dependent upon the circumstances, this may be treated as Gross Misconduct.

4. Retention

Employee files will be securely retained. For further details of retention periods, please refer to the Document Retention Policy.

5. Right to Access Rights to Information

Employees and third-party partners have individual rights to access personal data that is being held about them either on computer or in manual files. Any person who wishes to exercise this right is required to submit a subject access request to The Data Protection Officer.

Refer to the following policy for further information.

- *Subject Access Request Policy*

Document Control

| Date of change | Version | Overview of amendment | Amended by / Job title | Approved by | Approval date |
|----------------|---------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 30/05/17 | 4 | Policy revised, and cover sheet added | Sharon Lawrence (Quality Manager) | Senior Management | 30/10/17 |
| 12/03/19 | 5 | Policy revised, retention, rights to access information. | Sarah Booth (HR Assistant) | Tom Armstrong (Director) | 18/03/19 |
| 10/06/20 | 6 | Page 2: Added 'Malpractice & Maladministration Policy' to be read in conjunction with this policy. Page 2: Legal Position: Added: deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above five matters Page 3: Added 'and is made in good faith' in paragraph 1. | Sarah Booth (HR Assistant) | David Read (Group HR Manager) | 24/06/20 |
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