
	Policy:HR05 V.2.2	 European Union European Social Fund
	Date: 21/03/2024	
	Title: Title: Whistleblowing Policy	

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Authorised by

Name Jake Sexton



Role Head of People and CCO

1 ABOUT THIS POLICY



We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards in accordance with our Code of Conduct and Company Rules.

However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

1.1 Purpose

The aims of this policy are to encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.

To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns and to reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

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1.2 Applicability

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, work placement students, casual workers and agency workers.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

1.3 Personnel responsible for this policy

The Director of PET-XI have overall responsibility for this policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this policy.

The Whistleblowing Officer has day-to-day operational responsibility for this policy, and must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.

The Whistleblowing Officer, in conjunction with the Director of PET-XI should review this policy from a legal and operational perspective at least once a year.



The Whistleblowing Officer is the Head of HR/ People

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the Whistleblowing Officer.

2 WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity;
- failure to comply with any legal or professional obligation or regulatory requirements;
- miscarriages of justice;
- danger to health and safety;
- damage to the environment;
- bribery under our Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy;
- financial fraud or mismanagement;
- negligence;

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- breach of our internal policies and procedures including our Code of Conduct;
- conduct likely to damage our reputation;
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

A whistle-blower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a whistleblowing concern) you should report it under this policy.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate.

If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy, you should seek advice from the Whistleblowing Officer.

3 RAISING A WHISTLEBLOWING CONCERN



We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your Line Manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer.

They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases, they may refer the matter to the Whistleblowing Officer.

However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your Line Manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact the Whistleblowing Officer.

Please email your concern to: whistleblowing@pet-xi.co.uk. Only the Whistleblowing Officer has access to this inbox. Therefore, your concern is secure and confidential.

We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

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We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

If your concern relates to the Whistleblowing Officer, please direct any concerns you have to the Chair of Governors.

4 CONFIDENTIALITY

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible.



Whistle-blowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Whistleblowing Officer and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline. (Details below)

5 INVESTIGATION AND OUTCOME

Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

In some cases, we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

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If we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistle-blower will be subject to disciplinary action.

The Whistleblowing Officer will report to the Governors the outcome of the Whistleblowing investigations, anonymising the detail but confirming the outcome and any actions arising from the investigation.

6 IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED

While we cannot always guarantee the outcome you are seeking, we will try to deal with your concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this policy, you can help us to achieve this.

If you are not happy with the way in which your concern has been handled, you can pursue the matter through the Grievance Procedure.

7 EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES



The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will never be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a customer, supplier or service provider. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with the third party directly. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally first. You should contact your line manager or HR for assistance.

8 CONCERNS RELATING TO GOVERNORS

If a concern against a Governor is received, then this will be treated in the same way as any other concern. It will receive the same serious consideration. Such a concern would

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normally be raised with the Chair of Governors. Where the concern relates to the Chair of Governors, it should be taken via the Local Authority.

9 PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

It is understandable that whistle-blowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistle-blowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer

immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistle-blower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation.

9.1 Related Policies

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

Grievance Procedure

Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy