

## **SCCL Policy**

### Whistleblowing Policy



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## 1. Definitions

- *Whistleblowing*: The official name for whistleblowing is making a disclosure in the public interest; it means that if you believe there is wrongdoing in your workplace and you report this in the correct way your employment rights are protected
- *Malpractice*: This is the term used for improper, illegal or negligent behaviour by anyone in the workplace

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. Colleagues are often the first people who realise that there may be something seriously wrong within an organisation, but they may not raise their concerns. This may be because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or the organisation, or they fear that they may be victimised. They may feel that what may just be a suspicion of wrongdoing is not enough to justify reporting the matter, or it may seem easier to turn a blind eye.
- 2.2. Criminal behaviour or wrongdoing by a colleague, or any person representing SCCL, should be reported and dealt with appropriately.
- 2.3. This Whistleblowing Policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 – also referred to as 'The Whistleblowers' Act'. Under this Act, colleagues are legally protected from dismissal or unfavourable treatment by their employers as a result of raising concerns. No member of Colleagues should feel at risk of retaliation or adverse treatment when raising legitimate concerns.
- 2.4. There are existing HR procedures in place to enable colleagues to raise general concerns relating to issues such as payroll problems, disciplinary issues and working conditions. In addition, there is a Grievance Policy that enables colleagues to complain if they feel that these HR procedures are not working effectively, and they have been treated unfairly.
- 2.5. This Whistleblowing Policy is intended to cover any other form of malpractice, including fraud, theft, corruption and health & safety concerns.
- 2.6. The SCCL Board is committed to managing the organisation in the best way possible. This policy is in place to reassure colleagues that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and to enable concerns to be raised at an early stage and in the right way. Rather than wait for proof colleagues are encouraged to raise the matter early when it is still a concern. It can be difficult to know what to do when these concerns are about unlawful conduct, financial irregularities, abuse of power, patients, dangers to the public or environment, health and safety issues, or if you feel these issues are being inappropriately concealed.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all colleagues who work for Supply Chain Coordination Limited (SCCL), whether full-time or part-time, self-employed, employed through an agency, as a volunteer or as a contractor. Additionally, this policy is to be applied consistently and in line with SCCL values.
- 3.2. This policy is founded on the principle that the organisation and its colleagues should carry out their business and personal conduct in an ethical manner.
- 3.3. This policy does not replace the SCCL's Grievance Policy or Complaints Policy.
- 3.4. Depending on the nature of a colleague's concerns, other policies (such as the Anti-Fraud Policy, or the Bribery & Corruption Policy) may provide relevant guidance. This Whistleblowing Policy does not set out to duplicate that guidance and colleagues are encouraged to refer to other policies, where relevant.



#### 4. Aims & Objectives

- 4.1. This policy aims to encourage and enable colleagues to raise serious concerns within the organisation through approved channels, rather than to overlook a problem or raising the issue outside through unapproved routes.
- 4.2. Under this policy, you are encouraged to make a report if you have an honest and significant concern about any aspect of service provision, or the conduct of the organisation's directors, managers and colleagues (or other parties acting on behalf of the organisation) which may:
  - Be unlawful
  - Breach the organisation's policies
  - Breach established standards of practice
  - Represent a failure to comply with a legal obligation
  - Be a miscarriage of justice
  - Endanger an individual's health and safety
  - Cause damage to the environment
- 4.3. Deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above can and should be reported under this policy.
- 4.4. This policy is intended to provide avenues for colleagues to raise concerns, receive feedback on the action taken and gain reassurance that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation.
- 4.5. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any detriment (such as reprisal or victimisation). Provided you are acting in good faith, and it does not matter if you are genuinely mistaken or if there is an innocent explanation for your concerns<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.6. The Board is committed to the effective implementation of this policy.

#### 5. Raising Concerns

- 5.1. Where colleagues have concerns that are covered by this policy, they are encouraged to raise them with their line manager (or their line manager's manager) in the first instance.
- 5.2. If they do not feel comfortable doing this, they can raise concerns with the Director of Governance, Assurance & Legal or the Head of Risk & Compliance.
- 5.3. If they would rather raise concerns anonymously or via an independent, external channel, they can contact the whistleblowing hotline.
- 5.4. If the concern is not considered to be a whistleblowing issue, colleagues will be advised to raise their concerns internally through the appropriate HR channels; for example, by using SCCL's Grievance Policy.
- 5.5. Colleagues can contact the whistleblowing hotline via the following channels:
  - Phone 0808 196 5770
  - Web Reporting Tool [www.sccl.ethicspoint.com](http://www.sccl.ethicspoint.com)
  - SpeakingUp™ Mobile app Access Code: <https://sccl.navexone.eu>
- 5.6. Whilst colleagues will not be expected to prove the truth of an allegation that is made, and it will be necessary to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

<sup>1</sup> If, following a thorough investigation, it is found that a matter has been raised maliciously this will be dealt with under the SCCL's Disciplinary Policy.



- 5.7. The whistleblowing hotline provides a secure, anonymous reporting route. This allows reports to be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The information submitted via this route will be sent to the Director of Governance, Assurance & Legal and the HR Director for further investigation.
- 5.8. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of SCCL taking into account the following factors:
- The seriousness of the issues raised
  - The credibility of the concern
  - The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources
- 5.9. The procedures in place are designed to ensure concerns can be dealt with internally, wherever possible. However, if you believe that a disclosure of information should be made externally in the public interest, you are encouraged to first seek independent specialist advice (see Section 9).
- 5.10. Where an individual does not wish to come forward as a witness, SCCL retains the right to pursue the matter further and will respect the anonymity of the individual unless required to disclose it by law. However, it should be noted that this could affect the investigation and an opportunity to provide feedback.
- 5.11. With these assurances, it is hoped you will raise any concerns openly.

## **6. Safeguards**

- 6.1. SCCL will not tolerate any victimisation of people who have raised concerns in good faith and will take appropriate action to protect such people, including any necessary disciplinary action.
- 6.2. Wherever possible, the external whistleblowing hotline service provider and SCCL will protect the identity of any colleague who raises a concern and who does not want his/her name disclosed. However, this may not always be possible, as any investigation process may in itself reveal the source of information and a statement by the whistleblower may be a necessary part of the evidence.
- 6.3. Any concern that is sincerely felt and expressed may, on an investigation, prove to be unfounded. SCCL will try and ensure that the negative impact of either a false or unfounded allegation on any "accused" person is minimised but acknowledges that it will not be possible to prevent all of the repercussions potentially involved.

## **7. Investigating Concerns**

- 7.1. Any concerns raised will be investigated by senior management. They may also be subject to an independent enquiry or investigation by the Police.
- 7.2. The nature and extent of actions taken will depend on the nature of the concerns raised.
- 7.3. Necessary actions that are required urgently will be carried out ahead of any investigation.
- 7.4. The matter will be dealt with promptly at each stage. Where appropriate, immediate steps will be taken to remedy the situation as soon as practicably possible.
- 7.5. Concerns will be acknowledged and an indication given of how the organisation proposes to deal with the matter, along with an indication of the likely timescales involved in providing a final response, within 14 days. If it is not possible for initial enquiries to be completed within 14 days, the letter of acknowledgement will explain this.
- 7.6. If a decision is made not to investigate the reasons will be explained.
- 7.7. Some concerns may be capable of resolution by agreed action without a full investigation.



7.8. Concerns or allegations raised which fall outside the scope of this policy (for example, issues covered by HR processes) will be considered under those procedures.

## **8. Raising Concerns with External Bodies**

8.1. It is recognised that there may be circumstances where colleagues feel they need to report matters to external bodies such as the Police, the Secretary of State for Health or if the concern is about fraud and corruption, the NHS Fraud Hotline. A full list of persons/bodies can be found in The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999. An extract from the Order can be found on the whistleblowing intranet page.

8.2. If members of colleagues are contemplating making a wider disclosure, they are strongly advised first to seek further specialist guidance from professional or other representative bodies.

8.3. SCCL recognises that colleagues may wish, after taking account of advice, to raise their concerns with MPs or the media. Colleagues should bear in mind that this action if done maliciously, could result in disciplinary action or undermine public confidence.

8.4. Disclosure of concerns to MPs or the media may attract statutory protection from victimisation where the following apply:

- The whistleblower has an honest and reasonable suspicion that the wrongdoing has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur
- The whistleblower honestly and reasonably believes that the information and any allegation contained in it are substantially true
- The whistleblower has not gained personally from the disclosure
- The whistleblower has raised the concern with SCCL or a prescribed regulator
- The matter is exceptionally serious

## **9. Independent Advice**

9.1. If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want confidential advice at any stage, you may contact any of the following:

- Your Trade Union or Professional Organisation
- A statutory body such as the General Medical Council, the Health Professions Council or the Nursing & Midwifery Council
- The independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or by email at [helpline@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:helpline@pcaw.co.uk).

## **10. Responsibilities**

10.1 The Director of Governance, Assurance & Legal owns this policy and is responsible for ensuring it is implemented appropriately and communicated adequately to colleagues.

10.2 The Director of Governance, Assurance & Legal and the HR Director are responsible for ensuring that whistleblowing reports are investigated appropriately.

10.3 All line managers are responsible for creating an environment where colleagues feel able to raise concerns freely.

10.4 All colleagues are responsible for raising reasonable concerns through the appropriate channels.

## **11. Knowledge Management**

11.1 Colleagues are required to complete mandatory training in relation to whistleblowing on a regular basis to ensure they are aware of how to raise concerns.





11.2 In addition, access to key information such as a 'How to...' guide and relevant external resources are available via the dedicated whistleblowing page on the intranet.

## 12. Monitoring the Policy

12.1 This policy shall be reviewed by the Director of Governance, Assurance & Legal. It will be agreed through the Audit Risk Committee (ARC) at least once every two years.

12.2 The Head of Risk & Compliance is responsible for collating details of any cases which are dealt with under this policy and will provide an aggregated report to the ARC on an annual basis. This will help identify key themes and will also help SCCL assess the effectiveness of this policy. The report will outline the nature of the concern and the outcome in a format that does not result in the colleague's identity being disclosed.

## 12. Usefull Links

- <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>
- <https://pcaw.org.uk/>
- [Trade Union and Labour Relations \(Consolidation\) Act 1992](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/join-trade-union>
- <https://www.tuc.org.uk/>
- [https://whistleb.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAqdP9BRDVARIsAGSZ8AnumnNFtfJTVMK1-4d8Nbj\\_iW\\_91WMFabt40RPXVy9sLFCSETRbSQaAmDKEALw\\_wcB](https://whistleb.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAqdP9BRDVARIsAGSZ8AnumnNFtfJTVMK1-4d8Nbj_iW_91WMFabt40RPXVy9sLFCSETRbSQaAmDKEALw_wcB)

