



Whistleblowing Policy And Procedure

Whistleblowing At Work

Introduction

Whistleblowing in this Policy refers to the disclosure internally or externally by CEAL owners or their employees of malpractice, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work. Concerns about safeguarding or allegations against staff should follow the relevant safeguarding policies and procedures.

Policy statement

CEAL is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in public life and in all its practices. To achieve these ends it encourages freedom of speech. CEAL is encouraged to use internal mechanisms for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions by employees or ex-employees, those who are self-employed and working with the organisation, assessors or verifiers or others associated with the organisation not specifically mentioned.

Other policies and procedures

CEAL has a range of policies and procedures, which deal with standards of behaviour at work; they cover Discipline, Grievance, Harassment and Recruitment and Selection. CEAL uses the provisions of these procedures when appropriate. There may be times, however, when the matter is not about a personal employment position and needs to be handled in a different way. Examples may be:

- Malpractice or ill treatment of a customer by a facilitator or senior member of staff
- Repeated ill treatment of a customer, despite a complaint being made
- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- Suspected fraud
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to health and safety at work
- The environment has been, or is likely to be, damaged
- Breach of standing financial instructions
- Showing undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant
- A breach of a code of conduct
- Information on any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed.

CEAL will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistle-blower (including informal pressures), and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Role of Trade Unions

CEAL recognises that employees, facilitators and others associated with centres may wish to seek advice and be represented by their trade union(s) officers when

using the provisions of this policy and acknowledges and endorses the role trade union officers play in this area.

Designated officers

The following people have been nominated and agreed by CEAL as designated officers for concerns under this procedure. They will have direct access to the most senior person in the organisation.

Designated officer is: Sophie Keene

Role of designated officer

Concerns should be first raised with the CEAL owner or the designated officer. Where concerns are raised with him/her, he/she will arrange an initial interview, which will if requested be confidential, to ascertain the area of concern. At this stage, the whistle-blower will be asked whether he/she wishes his/her identity to be disclosed and will be reassured about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation. He/she will also be asked whether he/she wishes to make a written or verbal statement. In either case, the designated officer will write a brief summary of the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.

Role of the most senior person in the organisation

The designated officer will report to the most senior person in the organisation, who will be responsible for the commission of any further investigation including referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if applicable.

Complaints about the most senior person in the organisation

If exceptionally the concern is about the most senior person in CEAL, this should be made to the Awarding Organisation who will decide on how the investigation will proceed.

The Investigation

The investigation may need to be carried out under the terms of strict confidentiality i.e. by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so. This may be appropriate in cases of suspected fraud. In certain cases, however, such as allegations of ill treatment of patients/clients/ customers, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of customers is paramount in all cases.

- The designated officer will offer to keep the whistle-blower informed about the investigation and its outcome.
- If the result of the investigation is that there is a case to be answered by any individual, the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure will be used.
- Where there is no case to answer, but the whistle-blower held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the designated officer should ensure that the whistle-blower suffers no reprisals.
- Only where false allegations are made maliciously will it be considered appropriate to act against the whistle-blower under the terms of the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Inquiries

If the concern raised is very serious or complex, an inquiry may be held.

CEAL recognises the contribution the trade union(s) can make to an inquiry and agrees to consult with the trade union(s) about the scope and details of the inquiry, including the implementation of the recommendations of the inquiry. CEAL recognises that in many cases it will be desirable that a trade union(s) representative will be appointed to the panel of the inquiry.

Following the investigation

The most senior person in the organisation will brief the designated officer as to the outcome of the investigation. The designated officer will then arrange a meeting with the whistle-blower to give feedback on any action taken. (This will not include details of any disciplinary action, which will remain confidential to the individual concerned). The feedback will be provided within the time limits (to be specified).

If the whistle-blower is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, CEAL recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators, or, where justified, elsewhere.

The Law

This policy and procedure has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, where those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions. The Act is incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996, which also already protects employees who take action over, or raise concerns about, health and safety at work.

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Proprietor's Signature:	Sophie Keene
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