

Frequently asked questions

These are provided for guidance or quick reference guide only, so always refer to the policy

1. General Definitions

1.1 What is whistle-blowing?

Whistle-blowing is the term used when an employee raises a concern about a possible risk, wrong-doing or malpractice at work that has a public interest aspect to it, usually because it threatens or poses a risk to others e.g. patients, donors, colleagues, the public or NHSBT itself. Examples of this could be professional misconduct, damage to the environment, unlawful conduct and financial malpractice.

If the employee reasonably believes that one of these matters is happening or is likely to happen, (and it is in the public interest) and they bring this to the attention of their employer this is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'.

Whistle-blowing concerns are different to grievances, which by contrast, are about the employee's own employment position and have no additional public interest.

We have a Whistle-blowing Policy to enable employees to raise any concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.

1.2 What is Freedom to Speak Up?

Freedom to Speak Up is an agenda to encourage a safe, open culture in our workplace. It also includes an independent and confidential route for you to raise a concern if you do not feel comfortable to do so with your manager. For more information, visit [Freedom to Speak](#) up pages on Link.

2. Raising your Concern

2.1 Do I have to provide my name when raising a concern?

Our policy encourages you to provide your details, however, we will always respect your confidentiality. We will not disclose your identity unless required to do so by law.

By having your details, it means that we can speak to you confidentially about your concerns, and to ensure that they receive proper investigation etc. By providing us with your identity it also allows us to keep you informed as to progress of any investigation, including outcomes and learning. However, any action taken against another individual will remain confidential.

2.2 Can I provide my complaint anonymously?

Our policy encourages you to provide your identity when making a complaint. We will respect your confidentiality and will not disclose your identity unless required to do so by law. By providing us with your identity means that we can speak to you to seek to understand the details about your concern wherever necessary and to ensure that we are able to provide you with details of any outcomes and appropriate follow up action we may have taken etc. However, we will not be able to provide details of any action taken against any individual.

Should the information be provided anonymously, because we take such matters seriously, we will still carry out a 'fact-find' to establish the details of the complaint as far as we are able. However, such anonymous complaints, are difficult to follow through, and no feedback can ever be made to the complainant.

2.3 What happens if a complaint is made about me?

If there is a complaint made about you, we would first seek to understand the details of the complaint. We would then need to identify what process we would follow to investigate the complaint. Where there is a complaint about a person from another, this will normally be dealt with under the Dignity at Work Policy. If the complaint is about an NHSBT process, then the Grievance Policy will be followed.

Regardless of the process used, we will ensure that you are treated with respect and dignity, and details of the case will be kept confidential. Should the findings in any investigation result in a formal sanction or panel being convened, details will only be shared with those involved in the investigation and decision-making process, as well as your own representation etc.

2.4 What happens if a complaint is made maliciously?

If a complaint is made whether anonymously or otherwise, through investigation it is found to be malicious, appropriate action will be taken against any individual or group of people found to be connected. Such behaviour is totally unacceptable and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

2.5 What if I'm not comfortable raising my whistle-blowing concern with my manager?

We hope that you will feel able to raise your concern with your manager in the first instance. However, if for whatever reason, you feel unable to raise the matter with them then we would encourage you to find an alternative manager in your department who may be senior to your manager to discuss your whistle-blowing concern with, as they may be able to assist you to find a resolution. If you feel that your concern involves your manager you should, in the first instance, try to discuss your whistle-blowing concern with another manager who is more senior in your department.

If you have already done this or you do not feel comfortable doing this there are several ways in which you can tell us about your concern. These are listed in the Whistle-blowing Policy.

2.6 What if I'm not able to raise my Whistle-blowing concern with anyone at NHSBT?

We would hope that you feel able to raise your whistle-blowing concern with someone in NHSBT. The Whistle-blowing Policy enables you to raise your concerns about any malpractice or serious wrongdoing at an early stage and in the right way.

If you are concerned about what will happen if you raise your concern internally, we can assure you that we will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone who raises a genuine concern. If you raise a genuine concern, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any detriment (such as reprisal or victimisation). Providing you are acting in good faith it does not matter if you are mistaken.

We will not disclose your identity unless required to do so by law.

However, while we hope that the policy gives you the reassurance to raise your concerns internally, we do recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report matters to outside bodies such as regulators or the police.

Also, if you have already raised your concern internally and are still dissatisfied with the response you have received you can contact the other levels or bodies. These are listed in the Whistle-blowing Policy.

2.7 Are the email accounts for raising a Whistle-blowing concern confidential?

Yes, the e mail option for you to raise your Whistle-blowing concern has been provided if you feel, for whatever reason, unable to raise the matter with your manager. It can also be used where you are dissatisfied about how your concern has been handled.

2.8 What should I do if an employee has raised a Whistle-blowing concern?

If an employee has raised a concern with you, the first thing that you will need to do is decide if their concern or issue falls under the Whistle-blowing Policy.

If the issue relates to something that involves them on a personal level, then it will most likely fall under the Grievance or Dignity at Work.

If the issue does fall under the Whistle-blowing Policy, you will need to ask the employee if they would like their identity to be kept confidential throughout the process. You will need to assess initially what action needs to be taken, this may involve an informal review or a formal investigation.

If you are able to resolve the issue through an informal review you need to keep the employee fully informed. Any agreement reached should be recorded in writing and sent to everyone involved, including the person who raised the concern.

If the issue is too serious to be resolved informally you need to contact [HR Direct](#) to discuss what action you need to take.

If the employee has asked you to keep their identity confidential you will also need to let [HR Direct](#) know this when you contact them or anyone else involved with the issue.

You will also need to keep the employee updated as to who is handling the matter. This could be verbally or if they have requested this can be in writing summarising their concern and setting out how it is proposed to be handled with a time frame for feedback.

2.9 When should I use the Whistle-blowing policy?

If you have a concern which feels serious because it is about any possible danger or professional misconduct that might affect patients, donors, colleagues or NHSBT itself, then you can raise this through the Whistle-blowing Policy. Examples of where this policy could be used are where your concern is about:

- professional misconduct (which could be unacceptable or improper behaviour by a professional person)
- unlawful conduct (which could be unauthorised by law or illegal), or
- financial malpractice

If something is troubling you which you think we should know about or consider you should use this procedure. If, however you have a concern about your personal position, you would need to raise this under the Grievance or Dignity at Work policies. If you are unsure about which policy to follow or need any further advice about your situation, contact [HR Direct](#).

2.10 Will my identity be protected if I raise a Whistle-blowing concern?

We recognise that there may be reasons why you may wish to raise a concern in confidence under this policy for example you may be worried about how you will be treated if you raise a concern. Or you may feel that raising a concern would be disloyal to colleagues or the organisation.

We are committed to this policy and will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. If you ask us to protect your identity, by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your agreement unless required by law. Therefore, you should always say at the beginning if you do not want your identity to be revealed so that we can ensure we can handle your concern in the right way.

However, there may be situations that arise when we are not able to resolve your concern without revealing your identity, for instance because your evidence is needed in court. We would discuss this with you as to whether and how we could proceed.

2.11 What should I do if I have a concern about a vulnerable person while at work?

During your work, you may identify concerns or suspicions that a child, young person or adult is vulnerable and in need of safeguarding. It is important that you respond when they occur and not delay in acting.

You should report your concerns immediately to the registered nurse in charge (where present) or directly to the relevant senior manager on-call.

If, as a Registered nurse, you have concerns reported to you then you should report them to the relevant senior manager on-call. The Senior Manager should contact the named professional for safeguarding for advice and support on what action should be taken, including whether a referral to children's or adult social care as per local multi-agency procedures is appropriate. Contact information is available on People First under [Safeguarding](#).

Should you, during your work, witness a child, young person or adult being maltreated directly and in urgent need of medical treatment, or if there is immediate risk of harm you must call the police and/or an ambulance where appropriate and make a report to the police.

3. Policy Approval and Review

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4. FAQ's Section Details

Section	Section Heading	Page
1	General Definitions	
2	Raising your Concerns	