WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

This Whistleblowing Policy encourages and enables individuals to make a “protected disclosure” to raise serious concerns to the training provider in the public interest in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty, integrity and accountability therefore in line with that commitment we expect people who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Alphabet Training’s work to come forward and voice those concerns.

The purpose of this policy is to provide the approved way for concerns to be raised. An individual must reasonably believe that the disclosure tends to show past, present or likely future wrongdoing falling into one or more of the following categories:

- Criminal offences (this may include, for example, types of financial impropriety such as fraud).
- Failure to comply with an obligation set out in law.
- Miscarriages of justice.
- Endangering of someone’s health and safety.
- Damage to the environment.
- A serious safeguarding or child protection concern including any involvement in radicalisation or extremist activity.
- Covering up wrongdoing in the above categories.

It is not an alternative to the Alphabet Training’s established Grievance Procedure, which is the means by which an employee may raise a private concern about an employment matter.

SCOPE

Any serious concerns that an individual may have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of members of the Training provider’s community, or those acting on behalf of the Training provider can be reported under the Whistleblowing Policy.

There are existing separate procedures in place to enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their own employment including issues relating to bullying, harassment and discrimination. There is also a Complaints Policy for dealing with complaints. This procedure is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures.

POLICY STATEMENT

Alphabet Training welcomes the communication of genuine concerns and is committed to dealing with them responsibly, promptly, openly and professionally.

Any employee found to be subjecting a bona fide whistle-blower to any form of victimisation, discrimination or bullying and harassment will be dealt with under the Alphabet Training’s

Disciplinary Procedure. Whistle-blowers will not suffer any form of detriment as a result of raising their concerns.

However, if it is evident that an employee who is acting as a whistle-blower has made a malicious allegation, Alphabet Training's disciplinary procedure will be instigated.

This policy will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on grounds of sex, race, ethnicity or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, socioeconomic status, offending background or any other personal characteristic.

PROCEDURE

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

As a first step, the member of staff should normally raise concerns with their manager or their supervisor. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if a member of staff believes that management is involved (or that they cannot go to their line manager) they should approach the Executive Director or the Director of Quality and Compliance. In the event that a member of staff has a concern about these individuals, they should approach the Chair, or one of the Governors. Concerns may be raised orally or in writing.

Staff who wish to make a written report should include: (a) the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates); and (b) the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation. The earlier a member of staff expresses the concern the easier it is to act. Although they are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for their concern. Staff may obtain advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern by contacting the Director of Quality and Compliance or the HR Manager. If ultimately a member of staff feels that they have to take the matter externally, possible contacts are listed at the end of this policy.

To ensure that there is no confusion about the nature of the concern being raised, it is important to refer to this policy in all correspondence. If there is a more suitable policy to deal with the nature of the concern, the whistle-blower will be advised accordingly.

It is recognised that there may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and whereby external authorities will need to become involved. Where this is necessary, Alphabet Training reserves the right to make this referral themselves without the whistle-blower's consent. The Police will be informed in all instances where a criminal offence may have occurred.

If told not to raise or pursue a concern, individuals should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the most appropriate senior manager within the centre. An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence.

In order to raise a Whistleblowing concern, a detailed letter should be sent to the Line manager. Where the concern relates directly to a Senior Post Holder of the centre, this should be directed to the Director of the organisation.

Once an individual has formally raised a concern, the centre will commence an investigation and the whistle-blower will be contacted to acknowledge the concern and inform them of the action that the Centre intends to take.

While the purpose of the policy is to enable Alphabet Training to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, it may not be possible to give the person raising the concern details of the action that will be taken where this may infringe a duty of confidentiality that is owed to someone else.

An investigation will be conducted by a suitable Alphabet Training representative. If the concern has safeguarding implications, Alphabet Training will discuss the details with a Senior Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) prior to conducting an internal investigation. If required, the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) will be contacted to determine if action is required under the safeguarding disclosure process (See safeguarding Policy).

If external to Alphabet Training, they should follow the same procedures. it is advisable that they raise their concerns separately and do not discuss the issue to prevent any conflict of interest or opportunity to jeopardise an investigation.

All concerns raised under this policy will be treated as confidential and in a timely and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual raising the concern or making the disclosure will be kept confidential so long as this does not hinder any investigation. Concerns or disclosures expressed anonymously are less credible but will nevertheless be considered.

All individuals have a duty of confidentiality to Alphabet Training.

HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

This policy is intended to provide staff with an avenue within Alphabet Training to raise concerns. Alphabet Training hopes that staff will be satisfied with any action taken. If they are not, and if they feel it is right to take the matter outside the organisation, the following are possible contact points:

(a) Public Concern at Work (tel: 020 3117 2520), a registered charity whose services are free and strictly confidential;

(b) ACAS

(c) the local Citizens Advice Bureau;

(d) relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;

(e) a relevant voluntary organisation; and

(f) the police.

If a member of staff does take the matter outside the organisation, they should ensure that they do not disclose confidential information. They should check with the contact point they have approached.

Signed by the Managing Director

01/08/2026