

Whistleblowing procedure

Introduction

This Whistleblowing Procedure provides a secure, confidential mechanism for workers to report genuine concerns about workplace wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.

This policy ensures that all disclosures are investigated thoroughly, transparently, and in compliance with the relevant legal protections, such as the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).

Scope of the procedure

This procedure applies to all employees, contractors, consultants, agency staff, and trainees.

What Qualifies as Whistleblowing?

A whistleblowing disclosure involves reporting wrongdoing that is in the public interest. It applies when there is a reasonable belief that one or more of the following is happening, has happened, or is likely to happen:

- Criminal offences (e.g., fraud, bribery, theft)
- Breaches of legal obligations
- Miscarriages of justice
- Dangers to individual health and safety
- Environmental damage
- Deliberate concealment of any of the above

What is Not Covered?

Personal grievances, bullying, harassment, or individual contract disputes are not covered by this procedure. These matters must be raised through the company's internal Grievance Policy.

How to raise a concern

Employees of ADL Smartcare can find further detail of how to raise a concern in the Staff Handbook

For External sources to raise a concern

Step 1: Initial Report

- Contact: Report the concern to your Line Manager or supervisor either verbally or in writing. You can also report to privacy@adlsmartcare.com
- Content: Clearly state that you are making a formal disclosure under the Whistleblowing Procedure. Provide dates, times, facts, names, and any supporting evidence.

Step 2: Escalation Point

- Contact: If the issue involves your Line Manager, or if you feel uncomfortable discussing it with them, contact the Whistleblowing Officer or Head of HR / Compliance via privacy@adlsmartcare.com .

How the organisation will respond

Upon receiving a whistleblowing report, the organization will take immediate action to manage the investigation.

- **Acknowledgment:** The Whistleblowing Officer will acknowledge receipt of the report in writing within five working days.
- **Initial Assessment:** An assessment will determine whether the issue falls under this procedure and if a formal investigation is required.
- **Accompaniment:** During any investigative meetings, the whistleblower has the right to be accompanied by a colleague or a trade union representative.
- **Outcome Communication:** The whistleblower will be informed of the progress and, where legally permissible, the final outcome of the investigation.

Protection and confidentiality

Confidentiality and Anonymity

- The organisation will make every effort to keep the whistleblower's identity confidential if requested.
- Whistleblowers can submit reports anonymously, though anonymous reports can be significantly harder to investigate effectively if further details are required.

Protection from Retaliation

- **Zero Tolerance:** The organisation operates a strict zero-tolerance policy against any form of retaliation, victimization, or harassment directed at a worker who has made a protected disclosure.

Disciplinary Action: Any employee found to have mistreated a whistleblower will face immediate disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal.

External disclosures

If you reasonably believe the issue cannot be resolved internally, or that evidence may be destroyed, you may contact an external Prescribed Person or Body. Examples include:

- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for safety breaches.
- The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) for financial irregularities.
- The Environment Agency for ecological issues.

Free, independent, and confidential advice on how to handle a disclosure can be obtained from the independent charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work).