



Whistleblowing policy and procedures

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Introduction

The Neurological Alliance is committed to conducting business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace.

Scope

This policy applies to all people working for the Neurological Alliance or on our behalf of the Neurological Alliance in any capacity, including employees, trustees, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, contractors and suppliers.

This policy applies when anyone reports any wrongdoing in the workplace to ensure that it is reported, investigated and remedied appropriately. This policy does not cover grievance or harassment, both of which should be raised following the policies and procedures in the staff handbook.

What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities to the employer or relevant authority. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

The law protects whistleblowers from their employer subjecting them to detriment or dismissal because of their having “blown the whistle” and from detrimental treatment by their colleagues. To be protected by the law, the act of whistleblowing must fall within the legal rules and the whistleblower must reasonably believe that their disclosure of wrongdoing is made in the public interest.

Raising a concern

The process

Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible. No employee will suffer a detriment for speaking up if they believe that something is wrong.

If you have information you believe shows any of the following:

- A criminal offence has been committed or is being or is likely to be committed
- A person has or is or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred or is likely to occur
- The health and safety of any individual has been or is being or is likely to be endangered
- The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- That information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the above categories has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

You should in the first instance report your concerns to your Line Manager, if you are not an employee you should report your concerns to the Whistleblowing Officer. If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you or you feel they are not the person you should speak with, you should raise the matter with the appropriate person, organisation or body. If your concern relates to your manager, go to the Chief Executive, or if it relates to the Chief Executive, report to the Chair of the Board.

In any subsequent meeting arranged to discuss a concern, employees have the right to bring a colleague or Trade Union Representative. Your colleague / representative must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

After you have raised a concern, we will decide how to respond in a responsible and appropriate manner. This will usually involve making internal enquiries but it may become necessary to carry out a full investigation, which may be formal or informal depending on the nature of the concern raised. We will endeavour to complete investigations within a reasonable time. You will receive an initial response to your concern within 20 working days.

We will keep you informed of progress and let you know when the investigation is completed. We will not be able to inform you of any matters, which would infringe any duty of confidentiality owed to others.

If you use this policy to raise a concern, which you reasonably believe to be in the public interest, we assure you that you will not suffer any form of retribution or detrimental treatment.

Confidentiality

The Neurological Alliance hopes that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to protect your identity and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

External disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In general, you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. You will still be protected in law if you disclose the information to the following:

- A legal adviser in the course of getting legal advice
- A Minister of the Crown
- One of the prescribed persons set out in the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 1999 (e.g. disclosure of a danger to health and safety to the Health and Safety Executive; disclosure of fraud to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry; disclosure of breach of tax rules to HM Revenue & Customs).

Disclosure to any other person is not generally protected except in very limited circumstances. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect is an organisation that operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

Protection and support for whistleblowers

The Neurological Alliance's aim is to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the manager with whom you raised the concern immediately. If the matter is not remedied, you should raise it formally using the Neurological Alliance's grievance procedure.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct, you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases, the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Key contacts

Whistleblowing Officer	Marc Smith Marc.smith@brainandspine.org.uk 07798558607
Chief Executive	Georgina Carr Georgina.carr@neural.org.uk 07507938559
Chair of trustees	Cath Stanley cath.stanley@hda.org.uk
Protect <i>(Independent whistleblowing charity)</i>	https://protect-advice.org.uk/

Review

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, and/or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Charity Commission and funders
- as a result of any other significant change or event.