



STAT Whistle Blowing Policy

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1. Background

Whistleblowing is important because things can go wrong in every organisation and every public body. Where wrongdoing is happening, usually the first people to realise what is going on will be those who work in or with the organisation or close to the people carrying out the misdemeanour. Yet while employees and colleagues are the people best placed to raise the alarm or blow the whistle to remove or reduce the risk, they are also the people who have the most to lose if the organisation or fellow members do not appreciate their efforts.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1999 provides legal protection to anyone in work who blows the whistle if the disclosure is made in good faith and is about:

- a criminal act
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- miscarriage of justice
- danger to health and safety
- any damage to the environment
- an attempt to cover up any of these.

This STAT policy is to help people who have concerns about any of these areas and any other malpractice, and applies equally to employees, volunteers and members of STAT.

2. Introduction

1. It is not uncommon to have concerns about what is happening within the working environment. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or dangers to the public or the environment or harassment or misbehaviour, it can be difficult to know what to do.
2. You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling that it is none of your business or that it is only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues or to the organisation. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.
3. STAT takes very seriously any form of malpractice and this procedure exists to enable members to raise concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. STAT takes the view that it is preferable to raise an issue at an early stage when it is just a concern rather than to wait for proof. It is also important that any genuine suspicions are raised within STAT via this policy, rather than members or employees investigating the matter themselves.
4. If something is troubling you that you think STAT should know about or look into, please use this procedure. If you are aggrieved about your personal position, the Complaints Procedure is the appropriate avenue, which is available to you via the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC). However, this Whistle Blowing Policy is also available for concerns about your personal position where you are uneasy about using the Complaints Procedure, as well as where the interests of others or of the organisation

itself is at risk. Bear in mind that a whistleblower is a witness, not a complainant.

3. STAT's assurances to you

Your safety

1. STAT is committed to this policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this Policy, you will not be at risk of losing your position or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course this assurance is not extended to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know to be untrue.

Your confidence

2. STAT will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, STAT recognises that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this Policy. If you feel that your identity needs to be protected by keeping your confidence, it will not be disclosed without your consent. If the situation arises where the concern cannot be resolved without revealing your identity (for instance because your evidence is needed in court), STAT will discuss with you whether and how best to proceed.
3. However, if you do not reveal your identity at all, and wish to raise your concerns anonymously, it will be much more difficult for the matter to be investigated or to protect your position or to give you feedback. STAT will consider anonymous report but it may not be possible to gather sufficient evidence to fully investigate the matter in the absence of further information from the Whistleblower.
4. If you are unsure about raising a concern you can get independent advice from Public Concern at Work (www.pcaw.org.uk)

4. How to raise a concern internally

1. If you have a concern about malpractice, it should be raised first with one of the STAT Lead Directors. This may be done orally or in writing (including email).
2. If you feel unable to raise the matter with a STAT Lead Director, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with a member of the Preliminary Investigation Committee pool. Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact the Chair or Secretary of STAT.

5. How STAT will handle the matter

1. Once you have reported your concern, it will be assessed initially by the STAT Lead Directors to determine what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. A file will be opened to ensure the case is appropriately recorded, which will be held in confidence. You will be advised who is handling the matter, how you can contact her/him and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you so request, a letter summarising your concern and setting out how STAT proposes to handle it will be sent to you.
2. When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, you must make this clear at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within a complaints procedure you will be advised accordingly.
3. While the purpose of this Policy is to enable STAT to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, you will be given as much feedback as is reasonable in the circumstances. If requested, written confirmation will be sent to you. However, it may not be possible to tell you the precise action that has been/will be taken where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by STAT to a third party.

Time frame

The Lead Directors (or whoever is assigned to handle the case) will respond to you within 7 days of receiving the information.

The investigation

- It may be necessary for certain investigations to be carried out in strict confidence (with the person under investigation not being informed until necessary).
- Where there are allegations of ill treatment of clients, colleagues, or members of staff, the person under investigation may have to be suspended.
- The designated person will give feedback on the outcome of the investigation to the whistleblower.
- If the investigation shows there is a case to be answered, the disciplinary rules and procedures will be used.
- If there is no case to answer, the designated officer will ensure the whistleblower is protected, provided the disclosure has been made in good faith.
- Disciplinary action against the whistle blower will only be taken where it transpires that a false allegation has been made maliciously.

6. If you are dissatisfied

If you are unhappy with the initial response you get, remember you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this policy. Whilst it may not be possible to respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, STAT will try to handle the matter fairly and properly.