



BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

Whistleblowing Policy

January 2021

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1. Introduction

BCS aims to conduct its business with the highest standards of honesty and integrity and any wrong-doing by staff, officers or accredited partners should be reported. This policy is designed to deal with concerns raised in relation to specific issues of wrong-doing which may be illegal, against the public interest or damaging to the reputation of BCS.

By knowing about malpractice/poor practice we can take the necessary steps to safeguard the interests of our customers, centres, students and staff. In summary, do not hesitate to get in touch with us and 'speak up' or 'blow the whistle'.

We recognise that you may be worried that by reporting such issues you may be subject to some adverse action so we have outlined how you can choose to report an incident anonymously and how you will be protected.

2. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when you disclose an act, generally illegal, which the person committing the act would not wish to become public knowledge. The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest, so it must affect others, for example, the general public. Officially this is called 'making a disclosure in the public interest'.

Whistleblowing is distinct from complaints, employment disputes, grievance and alleged breaches of the members' Code of Conduct.

Complaints that count as whistleblowing

- a criminal offence, for example fraud;
- someone's health and safety is in danger;
- risk or actual damage to the environment;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- bribery or corruption;
- the company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance;
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing;
- actions which endanger the safety of staff or others (e.g. visitors).

Complaints that do not count as whistleblowing

- complaints about an expression of personal dissatisfaction (e.g. with a product or service being received) Anyone that wishes to raise these types of complaints should follow the BCS Complaints Policy;
- anyone who has a dispute about his or her own employment position or contract. If you are experiencing such a dispute you should take this up with your employer or another responsible body. We cannot investigate or taken any action over such instances;
- personal grievances (for example bullying, harassment, discrimination) unless your particular case is in the public interest. You should report these under your [employer's grievance policy](#).

3. How to make a Complaint

Anyone has the right to whistleblow if you feel it is right to do so in the public interest. Whilst we do not expect absolute proof of wrong-doing that you report, you will need to show the reasons for your concern. You can raise a contacting us, details are at the end of this policy.

4. What we will do

If you have provided your name and contact details, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 working days. It may be necessary to contact you again to ask for further information.

We will then investigate your complaint in accordance with our internal procedures and decide upon an appropriate response.

Once a concern has been raised we have a duty to pursue the matter. This means that it will not be possible to prevent the matter being investigated by subsequently withdrawing your allegation.

If the outcome results in a proven case of wrongdoing/malpractice, we will act against the relevant parties. We will inform you that the investigation has been concluded and the outcome of the investigation, where possible. We may not disclose all details of the investigation as it may not be appropriate for us to do so due to confidentiality or legal reasons.

If the allegation is not proven by the investigation, if you (as the whistle-blower) did not deliberately raise an allegation you knew to be untrue, no action will be taken against you by the BCS. If the allegation was made due to a genuine misunderstanding, the individual(s) who have been the subject of the investigation will be expected to bear no malice or ill feeling towards their accuser and that colleagues should not mistreat a whistle-blower.

If, however, the investigation concludes that you raised an allegation which you knew not to be true, we reserve the right to take further action.

5. Making your claim anonymously or confidentially

It is your right to choose to remain anonymous if you are concerned about repercussions. You may also choose to do so. Whilst we will try to respect your wishes with regards to confidentiality, this may not be possible in the following circumstances:

- the police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies require your information to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud;
- we are obligated to do so by a court of law;
- another person or organisation to whom we are required by law to disclose your identity.

You should also be aware of the fact that someone may be able to recognise you due to the nature or circumstances of the disclosure.

Please note that if you report your concern to the media, in most cases, you will lose your whistleblowing legal rights.

6. BCS Staff Only

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) protects all staff from dismissal or other disciplinary action when they report wrong-doing by their employers. To be protected by law, a worker must be making a disclosure of information which they reasonably believe is made in the public interest and which they reasonably believe shows one or more of the following examples of wrongdoing has occurred or is likely to occur. A disclosure will not be protected if the worker making it does not do so in the public interest, commits a criminal offence in making it, has received the information in the course of providing legal advice (legal privileged information) or does not make the disclosure in the reasonable belief that the content is substantially true.

Staff should normally raise the issue with their Line Manager in the first instance. If after reporting the matter the issue is not resolved, then please contact your Divisional Director. If, under the circumstances you do not feel comfortable about this, then you can raise the issue directly with the Chief Executive, Managing Director, Head of HR or Head of Compliance.

There are other options if you do not want to report your concern to BCS, for example you can [get legal advice](#) from a lawyer, or tell a [prescribed person or body](#).

If you tell a prescribed person or body, it must be one that deals with the issue you're raising, for example a disclosure about wrongdoing BCS Institute can be made to the Charity Commission.

7. Seeking Independent Advice

If you are considering making a disclosure to us and you are unsure as to whether you will have the protection of the whistleblowing provisions, before you make any disclosure you should consider:

- Getting independent legal advice
- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
<http://www.acas.org.uk>
- Contacting Protect which is an independent organisation which provides free legal advice to staff who are worried about malpractice at work:

Protect
CAN Mezzanine
7 - 14 Great Dover Street
London, SE1 4YR
Tel: 020 7404 6609 (Mon-Fri 9.00am-6.00pm)
Fax: 020 7403 8823
Email: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk
Website www.pcaw.co.uk

8. Review Arrangements

We will review this policy annually as part of our self-evaluation arrangements and will revise it as and when necessary in response to external feedback, trends from our internal monitoring arrangements, changes in our practices, actions from the regulatory authorities or external agencies or changes in legislation. If you would like to feed back any views, please contact us via the details below.

9. How to Contact Us

Who you should contact depends on the person you are telling us about:

About staff members:

Email: whistleblowing@bcs.uk / +44 1793 417424

About Trustees, Officers or Executive Board Members:

Attention of Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee rafc@bcs.uk

About Accredited or Approved Centres:

Email: whistleblowing@bcs.uk / +44 1793 417 417

By Post:

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