

## **BCTG Whistleblowing Policy and Supporting Strategy**

### **Policy**

The following statement outlines the Organisational policy for BCTG Limited.

### **Policy Aim**

To ensure that staff are protected from dismissal, victimisation, or other unfavourable treatment if they make disclosures in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 further protection was afforded by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (ERRA). Staff will also be protected under Article 10 – The Right of Freedom of Expression, under the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Principles Underpinning the Policy**

- Whistle blowing is a mechanism for an employee to raise a concern about a possible danger, illegality or serious risk that could threaten fellow colleagues, clients/learners or the public, or the reputation of BCTG or its partners.
- It is a duty of all staff, and those employed and/or working on behalf of any of our partners, to report any suspected serious malpractice, fraud, or corruption. (See Appendix A)
- It is our intent to have a clear policy that provides employees without fear of discrimination or victimisation to be able to disclose information that relates to wrongdoing or malpractice. The importance of safeguarding is reflected in our safeguarding policies and procedures and the wider context, and we endeavour to support any disclosure in relation to whistleblowing as a priority.
- Where staff knowingly choose to ignore the matter, they may be subject to disciplinary action or dependent on the seriousness of the matter, legal action.
- Staff must show it is reasonable to make the disclosure and not make the disclosure for personal gain
- Staff of any Sub-Contractors or Partner Providers must also follow this policy.

### **Related Company Policies**

- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Social Networking and IT Usage Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy

### **Implementation of the Policy**

The overall policy aim will be achieved through a range of procedures to ensure the following is achieved.

We will ensure, through training and through regular communication means, that staff understand that concerns can be raised orally but, preferably, in writing. Appendix A outlines a non-exhaustive list of definitions of malpractice.

Concerns should be raised in the first instance with a Senior Leadership Team Member. They will arrange an interview, in confidence, usually within 5 working days. The whistle blower may be accompanied by a colleague at the interview.

In raising a concern, details should include the background and history of the concern, including relevant dates, and the reason why the situation gives particular cause for concern.

Within three working days of the interview, the Senior Manager will recommend what steps should be taken. If this is not possible, the Senior Manager will advise the whistle blower of a revised timeframe.

This may include one or more of the following:

- Dealing with the matter under the BCTG grievance or disciplinary procedure.
- Reporting to the appropriate Funding Agency, the Environment Agency, Health & Safety Executive, Social Services Department, or other authority.
- Where the severity necessitates, reporting the matter to the Police.

The whistle blower will be informed of any outcome of the investigation as far as possible, subject to the rights of any third parties, and will be made aware of what steps have been taken in response to the concerns raised.

#### **Policy Outcomes**

The effective implementation of this policy will ensure BCTG meets all its legal requirements whilst providing a fair and open working environment.

#### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the BCTG Advisory Board.

**January 2024**

## Appendix A

Definitions of malpractice for the purposes of this policy include:

- Fraud or financial irregularity
- Corruption, bribery, or blackmail
- Criminal offences
- Failure to comply with a legal or regulatory obligation.
- Miscarriage of justice
- Endangering the environment
- Improper use of authority
- Financial mal administration arising from the deliberate commission of improper conduct.
- Falsification of records or claims either for financial or other gain.
- Deliberate concealment of information which tends to show evidence of any of the above.
- Serious breach of the Staff Code of Conduct.