

Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Whistleblowing Policy is to provide a framework for reporting and addressing concerns about wrongdoing, unethical conduct, or breaches of law and regulations within Skills Beyond. This policy aims to ensure that employees, students, and other stakeholders can report concerns without fear of retaliation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, students, contractors, and third parties associated with Skills Beyond. It covers any concerns related to misconduct, illegal activities, or unethical behaviour affecting the organisation.

Definition of Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns about wrongdoing, which may include:

- Criminal activity (e.g., fraud, theft)
- Breaches of legal or regulatory obligations
- Unethical or improper conduct (e.g., harassment, discrimination)
- Misuse of organisational resources
- Health and safety violations
- Environmental damage

Policy Statement

Skills Beyond is committed to maintaining high standards of integrity and accountability. We encourage individuals to report any concerns they have in good faith and without fear of retaliation. The organisation will take all reports seriously and handle them appropriately and confidentially.

Reporting Procedure

Internal Reporting

- **Step 1:** Concerns should be reported as soon as possible to an appropriate person within Skills Beyond, such as a line manager, supervisor, or designated Whistleblowing Officer.
- **Step 2:** If the concern involves the immediate supervisor or manager, or if the individual feels uncomfortable reporting to them, they should report the issue directly to the Whistleblowing Officer or another designated senior manager.

External Reporting

- If an individual feels that their concerns are not addressed appropriately internally, they may report the issue to external bodies such as regulatory authorities or professional bodies. Contact information for relevant external bodies can be provided by the Whistleblowing Officer.

Confidentiality

Skills Beyond will take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of individuals who report concerns. Information will only be disclosed to those who need to know in order to investigate the matter and take appropriate action. The identity of the whistleblower will be protected to the extent possible, consistent with legal obligations and the need for a thorough investigation.

Protection from Retaliation

Skills Beyond is committed to protecting individuals who report concerns in good faith from retaliation or adverse consequences. Retaliation against whistleblowers, including dismissal, harassment, or any form of discrimination, is prohibited and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Investigation Process

- **Initial Assessment:** Upon receiving a report, the Whistleblowing Officer will conduct an initial assessment to determine the appropriate course of action.
- **Investigation:** If necessary, a formal investigation will be conducted by an appointed investigator or panel. The investigation will be thorough, fair, and conducted in a timely manner.
- **Outcome:** At the conclusion of the investigation, the findings will be reported to the appropriate senior management, and any necessary corrective actions will be taken. The whistleblower will be informed of the outcome, subject to confidentiality considerations.

Monitoring and Review

Skills Beyond will regularly review this policy to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legal requirements. The Whistleblowing Officer will monitor the implementation of the policy and provide reports to senior management.

Contact Information

For further information or to report a concern, please contact:

Whistleblowing Officer

Skills Beyond

6 Old Station Close

Houghton-le-Spring

County Durham

DH4 6FB

07740305170

info@skillsbeyond.co.uk

Additional Resources

- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 \(PIDA\)](#): This UK law provides protection for whistleblowers and outlines the rights of individuals who report wrongdoing.
- [Advice Line | Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](#)