



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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Mission

'We will increase skills through the attainment of vocational and fundamental English and maths qualifications whilst improving learners' employability skills and life chances. We aim to increase employment levels, decrease NEET and meet the skills demands of the learners, Local Authorities, employers and LEP's that we serve.

Values

Maximising learner / customer success and achievement through innovative delivery to improve individual's life chances and / or employment opportunities, in a safe, secure and nurturing environment underpinned by our specific values of:

Respect, Honesty, Trust, Openness, Equality of Opportunity for all.

Vision

Through a socially inclusive approach, we will provide high quality learning and training support, to equip individuals with the skills for future employment, further development and or Further Education.

Nova Training is committed to delivering excellence, providing the best possible experience and effective IAG for all of our learners and staff alike; with a strong emphasis on Equality and Diversity and a commitment to Safeguarding all of our learners / customers to ensure they feel safe, and are safe. We aim to be a high-performing organisation with a passion for learning and a dedication to become the training provider of choice.

INTRODUCTION

Nova Training is committed to continuous improvement and providing a high standard of service to learners, employees and all its partners. Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within Nova. 'Whistleblowing' is viewed by Nova as a positive act that can make a valuable contribution to Nova's efficiency and long-term success. It is not disloyal to colleagues or Nova to speak up. We are committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in public life and in all of its practices. To help achieve these standards we encourage freedom of speech.

This policy applies equally to our employees, our stakeholders, our service providers and our suppliers.

OUR POLICY

This policy is designed to ensure that you can raise your concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within Nova Training without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.

It is also intended to encourage and enable you to raise serious concerns within Nova rather than ignoring a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

This Policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns at the earliest opportunity and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have made any disclosure in good faith.

If you are considering raising a concern you should read this Policy first. It explains:

- the type of complaints that count as whistleblowing
- how the person raising a concern will be protected from victimisation and harassment
- how to raise a concern, and
- what Nova will do.

As a whistle-blower you're protected by law - you should not be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near

future.

DEFINITION OF WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing is the reporting of wrongdoing, and will usually be something you have seen at work. The wrongdoing must be in the public interest, this means it must affect others. Further information and guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

THE TYPES OF COMPLAINTS THAT COUNT AS WHISTLEBLOWING

You're protected by law if you report any of the following:

- 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
- the company is breaking the law, for example does not have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

THE TYPES OF COMPLAINTS THAT DO NOT COUNT AS WHISTLEBLOWING

Personal grievances (for example bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. These concerns relate to your own treatment as an employee and you should raise these complaints under the Grievance Procedure or Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy. Details of how to do this can be located in the Employee Handbook.

If service providers, our suppliers or stakeholders have a concern, they should be raised under the Complaints Policy (NTS418).

Any complaints concerning safeguarding issues, including PREVENT (anti-terrorism and anti-radicalisation strategy) will be handled in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and any other relevant policies. You can also email your concerns or request support via safeguardingteam@novatraining.co.uk

PROTECTING THE WHISTLEBLOWER

Your Legal Rights

This policy has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, when those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions and in the public interest.

The Act makes it unlawful for Nova to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimised on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the Act.

Rarely, a case might arise where it is the employee that has participated in the action causing concern. In such a case it is in the employee's interest to come into the open as soon as possible. Nova cannot promise not to act against such an employee, but the fact that they came forward may be taken into account.

Harassment or Victimisation

Nova is committed to good practice and high standards and to being supportive of you as an employee.

We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If you honestly and reasonably believe what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer, your colleagues and those for whom you are providing a service.

We will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Support to you

Throughout this process:

- you will be given full support from Senior Management
- your concerns will be taken seriously, and
- Nova will do all it can to help you throughout the investigation

If appropriate, Nova will consider temporarily re-deploying you for the period of the investigation.

For those who are not Nova employees, we will endeavour to provide appropriate advice and support wherever possible.

Confidentiality

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if that is your wish. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as a result of your disclosure without your help, so you may be asked to come forward as a witness. If you agree to this, you will be offered advice and support.

Anonymous Allegations

This Policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible. If you do not tell us who you are it will be much more difficult for us to protect your position or to give you feedback. You can give your name but request confidentiality and we will make every effort to protect your identity.

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but they may be considered at the discretion of Nova. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issue raised
- the credibility of the concern, and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources

If you report your concern to the media, in most cases you will lose your whistleblowing law rights.

Untrue Allegations

If you make an allegation in good faith and reasonably believe it to be true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, we will recognise your concern and you have nothing to fear. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action, may be taken.

HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

This will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the wrongdoing. You should normally raise concerns with the following whistleblowing contacts:

- Your Line Manager
- Your Line Manager's Line Manager
- A member of the Senior Management Team: whistleblowing@novatraining.co.uk
- The HR Team: hrteam@novatraining.co.uk or 01902 366278
- The Managing Director: david.bucknall@novatraining.co.uk or 01902 366278 or in writing to Head Office – 3 Lower Lichfield Street, Willenhall, WV13 1PX.

Concerns may be raised face to face or by telephone or in writing. The earlier you raise a concern the easier it is to take action. You will need to show that there are reasonable grounds for your concern, why you believe it to be true and the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates).

It is recommended that you put your concern in writing, to enable you to share all of the facts. However, if you do not feel able to put your concern in writing, you can ask for a meeting with whichever of the whistleblowing contacts you consider to be appropriate.

You must tell us straight away if you do not wish anyone to know it was you who raised the concern.

NOVA TRAINING RESPONSE

Any action taken by Nova Training will depend upon the nature of the concern you have raised. It may be handled in any of the following ways:

- be investigated internally
- be referred to the Police
- be referred to the external Auditor
- form the subject of an independent enquiry.

In order to protect your identity and Nova Training, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, to determine the form it should take. It may be possible to resolve some concerns by taking agreed action without having to carry out an investigation.

However, if this is not the case, then within 10 days of the person to whom you have raised the concern having received it, they will write to you:

- acknowledging receipt of your communication
- indicating how the matter will be dealt with
- giving an estimate of how long it is likely to take to provide a final response
- telling you what initial enquiries have been made, if any and
- telling you whether further investigations will take place and, if not, why not.

At any meeting arranged to discuss this matter, you have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague of your choice, who is not involved in the area of work to which the concern relates.

Unless legal constraints prevent it, you will be fully informed about the outcome of any investigation that is carried out.

THE RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The Human Resources Operations Manager has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Policy. They may be contacted either via Nova email hrteam@novatraining.co.uk or 01902 366278. They will maintain a record of all concerns raised and their outcomes (in a form which will not endanger your confidentiality). They will submit a summary of the concerns raised, department to which they are related and any lessons learnt to the Board as concerns are reported. The aim of this is to ensure that Nova learn from mistakes and do not repeat them and to ensure there is consistency in approach across all departments when dealing with concerns raised under this policy.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.