

Responsibility:	Director of Quality & Compliance	Date doc. created:	V2 March 2022
Print name sign off:	Chris Garcia	Last review date of doc:	March 2024
Signature:	Chris Garcia	Next review date:	March 2025

BPN Whistleblowing Policy

This procedure applies to everyone associated with Best Practice Network, whether on a paid or voluntary basis or as part of our supply chain. It also applies to trainees in placement setting arranged by Best Practice Network.

Trainees/ apprentices who are employed in a setting or school should follow their organisation's whistleblowing policy unless they are on a placement in a setting or school arranged as part of the training programme.

Aims and purpose of this procedure

The aim of this procedure is to provide a clear and transparent way to raise genuine concerns about acts of wrongdoing or malpractice in the workplace or within the supply chain. It also aims to ensure that any concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion.

This procedure provides staff and associates with steps to deal with allegations ensuring that those raising the concern are not penalised for raising genuine concerns, even if those concerns prove to be unfounded.

When a concern is raised

If someone tells a Best Practice Network member of staff or associate, they are concerned about the actions of another staff member, trainee, apprentice, volunteer or supplier in their workplace or placement setting/school a meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.

Best Practice Network will always approach the situation sensitively, recognising the discomfort that the person may feel. If the person reporting the concern wants their identity to be kept confidential we will explain that this will be done if possible, but that it may not be achievable. We will make notes of the discussion with an individual and check the accuracy of the information with them.

Deciding what action to take

Once the nature of the concern has been established it might be deemed to be of relatively minor nature and the decision may be taken to resolve it informally.

If the concern appears more serious, we will consider first whether any immediate action is needed to protect children. This will be done in accordance with Best Practice Network's Safeguarding Policy. The

Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider whether there is a need to involve the police and or other statutory services (e.g. Ofsted).

If the concern is upheld and the person at the centre of it is found to have been culpable or remiss in some way, Best Practice Network will take urgent action and will ensure that the person raising the concern is fully supported.

If the concern is unfounded and the person who raised it is found, through the process of an investigation, to have acted maliciously or out of desire for personal gain, it may be appropriate to take further action.

General Principles

- Best Practice Network will not undertake investigations itself unless the conduct of a trainee, apprentice or member of our own staff is called into question. Should this situation arise the investigation will be conducted according to our disciplinary procedure
- Best Practice Network will refer evidence where appropriate to a setting or school's management
- Best Practice Network will refer evidence where appropriate to the relevant authorities such as Ofsted, Social Services, Police or NSPCC
- Best Practice Network will maintain a full record of any reported incidents or suspicions, including the procedures followed, feedback received and to whom the case was referred.
- All records will be protected in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

External Whistleblowing Contacts:

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-esfa-handles-whistleblowing-disclosures#how-to-make-a-disclosure-to-esfa>

Department for Education (DfE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/complaints-procedure#whistleblowing>

Ofsted

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted/sharing-concerns-and-information-with-ofsted-about-childrens-social-care-services#whistle-blow>