

Whistleblowing Policy.

1. About this policy

1.1 We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

1.2 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers, agency workers, students or clients.

1.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, and we may amend it at any time.

2. What is whistleblowing?

2.1 Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

3. How to raise a concern

3.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your manager or Ascento contact. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager or Ascento contact for any reason, you should contact the Operations Director. Contact details are at the end of this policy.

3.2 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 We hope that you will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

5. External disclosures

5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a mechanism for reporting, investigating, and remedying any wrongdoing within the business. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

5.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Protect operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6. Further Action

6.1 If your complaint is in respect to matters that may concern the awarding organisation, and you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint from Ascento, you have the right to appeal directly to the Awarding Organisation.

6.2 If your complaint is in respect to matters that may concern the Department of Education, and you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint from Ascento, you have the right to take your complaint directly to the DfE ;

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

7. Protection and support for whistle-blowers

7.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support whistle-blowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

7.2 Whistle-blowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Operations Director immediately.

7.3 You must not threaten or retaliate against whistle-blowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action.

7.4 However, if we conclude that a whistle-blower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistle-blower may be subject to disciplinary action.

7.5 Protect operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

8. Contacts

Operations Director	Tracy Stevenson tracy@ascento.co.uk
Protect (Independent Whistleblowing Charity)	Helpline: 0203 117 2520 Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk