

ETT Whistleblowing Policy

Signed: 

Position: Chief Executive

Date: November 2020

Review Date: November 2021

Introduction

The word whistleblowing in this policy refers to the disclosure internally or externally by employees of malpractice, as well as illegal acts or omissions at work.

Policy statement

ETT is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and ethical standards in public life and in all of its practices. To achieve these ends, it encourages freedom of speech. It also encourages staff to use internal mechanisms for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions by its employees or ex-employees.

Policy

ETT have a range of policies and procedures which deal with standards of behaviour at work. These policies cover Grievance & Discipline, Equality & Diversity and Bully & Harassment. Employees are encouraged to use the provisions of these procedures when appropriate. There may be times however, when the matter is not about your personal employment position and needs to be handled in a different way. Examples include:

- Malpractice or ill treatment of a customer by a senior member of staff
- Repeated ill treatment of a customer, despite a complaint being made
- A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- Suspected fraud
- Disregard for legislation, particularly in relation to Health & Safety at work
- The environment has been, or is likely to be, damaged
- Breach of standing financial instructions
- Showing undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant
- A breach of a code of conduct
- Information on any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be concealed

Note - This list is not exhaustive

ETT will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures), and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Designated Officers

The following people have been nominated and agreed by ETT as Designated Officers for concerns under this procedure. They will have direct access to the most senior person in the organisation.

Mr. Peter Williamson
209 Millisle Road
Donaghadee
Co. Down
BT21 0LN
Tel: 028 91882147 Mobile: 07771 655 655

Role of Designated Officer

Where concerns are not raised with the line manager, the Designated Officer will be the point of contact for employees who wish to raise concerns under the provisions of this policy. Where concerns are raised with him/her, he/she will arrange an initial interview, which will if requested be confidential, to ascertain the area of concern. At this stage, the whistleblower will be asked whether he/she wishes his/her identity to be disclosed and will be reassured about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation. He/she will also be asked whether or not he/she wishes to make a written or verbal statement. In either case, the Designated Officer will write a brief summary of the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.

Role of the most senior person in the organisation

The Designated Officer will report to the most senior person in the organisation, who will be responsible for the commission of any further investigation.

Complaints about the most senior person in the organisation

If exceptionally the concern is about the most senior person in ETT, this should be made to the Chairman of the ETT Board of Employers, who will decide on how the investigation will proceed. This may include an external investigation.

The investigation

The investigation may need to be carried out under the terms of strict confidentiality i.e. by not informing the subject of the complaint until (or if) it becomes necessary to do so. This may be appropriate in cases of suspected fraud. In certain cases however, such as allegations of ill treatment of customers, suspension from work may have to be considered immediately. Protection of customers is paramount in all cases.

The Designated Officer will offer to keep the whistleblower informed about the investigation and its outcome. If the result of the investigation is that there is a case to be answered by any individual, the Disciplinary Rules and Procedure will be used.

Where there is no case to answer, but the employee held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the Designated Officer should ensure that the employee suffers no reprisals. Only where false allegations are made maliciously, will it be considered appropriate to act against the whistleblower under the terms of the Disciplinary Procedure.

Enquiries

If the concern raised is very serious or complex, an enquiry may be held.

Following the investigation

The most senior person in the organisation will brief the Designated Officer as to the outcome of the investigation. The Designated Officer will then arrange a meeting with the whistleblower to give feedback on any action taken. (This will not include details of any disciplinary action, which will remain confidential to the individual concerned). The feedback will be provided within the specified time limits

If the whistleblower is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, ETT recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons.

The Law

This policy and procedure has been written to take account of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects workers making disclosures about certain matters of concern, where those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions. The Act is incorporated into the Employment Rights Act 1996, which also already protects employees who take action over, or raise concerns about, health and safety at work.