

Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide staff in relation to Whistleblowing in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, otherwise known as the 'Whistleblowers Act' and to make it clear what employees should do to disclose any concerns about the alleged wrongful conduct of the employer, employee, client, or any third party.

Whistleblowing is when an individual raises a concern about any suspected illegal wrongdoing or dangers at work. The Whistleblowing disclosure has to be "in the public interest". Whistleblowing is different to concerns regarding workplace grievances for which a Grievance Procedure is in place.

You can report things that are not right, are illegal or if you are concerned that anyone at work is neglecting their duties including:

- health and safety dangers
- damage to the environment
- any criminal offence
- a miscarriage of justice
- failure to comply with a legal obligation
- concealing any information relating to the above.

It is MJCA's policy to conduct all of our business in an honest, professional and ethical manner.

Should formal action against MJCA employees be required as a result of any disclosure made under this policy then the appropriate action will be carried out in accordance with the applicable internal policy.

Policy statement

This Whistleblowing policy is in place to encourage employees to confide in someone without fear of reprisal if they have concerns about any malpractice or wrongdoing at MJCA.

When dealing with situations under this policy we will aim to ensure that individuals feel that they have been treated fairly and consistently regardless of the outcome.

Protection

MJCA will support anyone who raises genuine concerns in good faith under this policy even if they turn out to be mistaken. We are committed to ensuring no one suffers any detrimental treatment, which includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern, as a result of disclosing any concerns. Anyone found to have reacted to the raising of genuine concerns in an unacceptable manner will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the MJCA policies.

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who 'blow the whistle' where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur.

If you believe that you have suffered any detrimental treatment as a result of making a report then you should inform the HR Department immediately.

How to raise a concern internally

We encourage you to raise concerns internally first so that we can investigate and take prompt appropriate action.

Please provide written details of your concerns and address it for the attention of your preferred manager. You will need to provide details of any evidence that you have and state that you are raising a concern under the Whistleblowers Act. This will ensure clarity of your concerns and allow MJCA to undertake a full investigation and make an appropriate response.

Please note that if you are asked to describe the issue verbally to a member of the management team you are entitled to have another employee to attend the meeting with you if you wish to do so.

MJCA will also investigate concerns expressed anonymously. The investigating manager will meet you as soon as possible to establish facts and support you. Support will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may include provision of information, a temporary transfer to a different work place or a period of paid absence to remove or protect you or another person from the situation.

Following the meeting, the investigating manager and you may agree that the discussion has resolved the issue, but if not the manager will undertake further investigations and implement an action plan to respond to and deal with the concerns that have been raised.

All concerns will be treated confidentially wherever possible. You can raise concerns anonymously but this may limit our ability to investigate fully.

Where it is known who has raised concerns under this policy, MJCA will aim to provide as much feedback as possible to the individual in relation to the findings from the investigation. MJCA are unable to disclose the precise action taken if this would infringe a duty of confidence owed to someone else.

How to raise a concern externally

If you believe your concern is not able to be properly addressed internally you can make a disclosure to a prescribed person or regulator.

A full list of prescribed bodies is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

Data Protection

Written records of conversations recorded by the investigating manager regarding a significant concern will be stored in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations.

Communication of this policy

Employees are provided with details of this policy on joining the company and a copy of the policy is also available on the F:drive.

Who is responsible for the policy?

The Board of Directors have overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored for effectiveness and reviewed annually.