

1. Policy Statement

NHSBT recognises that from time to time you may have concerns about what is happening at work. It is really important that you speak up about a concern, and are confident that we will listen. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, if your concern is about risk, malpractice or wrongdoing, it can be difficult to know what to do. This policy enables and supports you to raise your concerns and applies to all employees; volunteers, agency workers, and third parties.

This policy has been reviewed as part of the recommendations of the review by Sir Robert Francis into Whistle-blowing in the NHS, aimed at improving the experience of Whistle-blowing in the NHS.

What concerns can I raise?

You can raise a concern about risk, malpractice or wrongdoing you think is harming the service we deliver, for example:

- Unsafe patient/donor care
- Unsafe working conditions
- Inadequate induction or training
- Lack of or poor response to a reported donor/patient safety incident
- Suspicions of fraud (which can also be reported in accordance with our Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy)
- Raising concerns of poor treatment of a group of NHSBT colleagues for instances of e.g. bullying, harassment or victimisation.

Remember if you are a member of a professional body e.g. Doctor, Biomedical Scientist, Nurse etc. you may have a professional duty to report a concern in line with your professional code of conduct.

Feeling Safe and Confident to raise your concern

If in doubt, raise it. Do not wait for proof; raise it while current. If you raise a genuine concern, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any detriment (such as reprisal or victimisation). It does not matter if you turn out to be mistaken as long as you are genuinely troubled. We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine issue. However, we recognise that you may want to raise it in confidence. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent, unless required by law.

If your concern is about **your** employment that affects only **you**, refer to the Grievance Policy and/or the Dignity at Work Policy.

If you are not sure about which policy can help you with your particular situation or you need advice on how to proceed, contact HR Direct on (2) 7700.

2. The Process

How to Raise your Concern

Step One

If you have a concern about a risk, malpractice, or wrong doing at work, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your manager or manager's manager. This may be done verbally or in writing.

Step Two

If you feel unable to raise the matter with them, or you are dissatisfied about how it has been handled, then it may be raised by e mailing Katherine Robinson, Director of Workforce Katherine.robinson@nhst.nhs.uk in confidence without going through the normal management structure. If you want to raise the matter in confidence, tell us at the outset so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Alternatively, you can e-mail our dedicated e-mail address at: WHISTLE@nhsbt.nhs.uk

If you have concerns following this and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, then the concern should be raised with: Mr Charles St John Non-Executive Director Whistleblowing to a NED@nhsbt.nhs.uk

or

Step Three

If you feel you are unable to raise it with them, you can contact the Employee Assistance Programme (See contact details below). They will provide emotional support and general guidance on employment matters and will help you to properly understand which of our processes to follow, to ensure that your concerns are dealt with as quickly as possible, by the right person in the organisation. Following discussion, should you decide to blow the whistle, you will be put through to an independent dedicated helpline to report your concerns.

Contact the Whistle-blowing Service on 0844 892 4413.

All of these people have been given special responsibility and training in dealing with whistle-blowing concerns. They will treat the information you give confidentially. While you are encouraged as part of this policy to provide your identity they will not reveal your identity without your agreement.

If you still have concerns

While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise such matters internally, we recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report matters to independent outside bodies, such as:

- Your Trade Union or Professional Association
- The independent charity Public Concern at Work. www.pcaw.org.uk
- Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) www.gov.uk/government/organisations/medicines-and-healthcare-products-regulatory-agency
- Human Tissue Authority (HTA) www.hta.gov.uk
- The Department of Health helpline 0800 0724 725 provides:
 - ✓ Free confidential advice to NHS/social care employees that witness wrong doing and are unsure whether or how to raise their concern
 - ✓ Advice and support to managers or those responsible for policy development and best practice
 - ✓ Advice on how to respond to whistle blowing concerns that have been raised.

Further information is available at: <http://wbhelpline.org.uk>

What we will do

Once you have told us your concern, we will initially assess what action should be taken. This will be recorded and managed through the HR case management system. This may involve an informal review or a formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it, with a timeframe for feedback. If we have misunderstood the concern in any way, or there is any information missing, you should let us know.

When you raise the concern, it would help us to know how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the start. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Policy or Dignity at Work Policy, we will tell you. For information on Safeguarding Adults and Children refer to MPD 961.

We will provide you with regular updates on progress of your complaint. While the purpose of this policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. However, we may not be able to tell you any precise action taken where this would infringe our duty of confidence to someone else. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for instance, because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.

If a matter is raised about you

If somebody raises a concern that may involve you, you will be asked to participate openly and honestly in any initial fact-finding or formal investigation. If the person raising the concern does not wish their identity to be revealed, you must respect their decision. Should they be required to reveal their identity for example for legal reasons, full discussions will take place with that individual and with you to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Sometimes, we receive concerns anonymously. This is discouraged for the reason outlined above; however, we would ask that you participate in any fact-finding or formal investigation in the normal way.

If a complaint is made against you, we will ensure that you are treated with dignity and respect, and ensure that you receive the necessary support.

Confidentiality

All conversations, either informal or formal, meetings, witness statements, investigations etc, must be kept confidential by all parties involved. We appreciate that this can sometimes be difficult when working in a small team or close environment; however, so that the issue raised can be brought to a swift conclusion and everyone feels able to move on, confidentiality must be maintained.

Raising a Matter Anonymously

To ensure we can provide you with the appropriate assurances and able to provide feedback, you are encouraged to put your name to your concern.

If you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter or to protect your position or to give you feedback. It may also be more difficult for us to provide the assurances we offer in the same way should you report a concern anonymously.

However, we have a duty to ensure that all complaints are taken seriously, and therefore an initial fact-finding exercise will take place to establish if any further investigation is warranted. If a complaint is found to be malicious or in collusion with others, it is possible that an individual or individuals making such claims will be investigated under the Disciplinary Policy.

Learning from your Concern

The focus of any investigation will be on improving the service we provide to donors and patients. Where an investigation takes place, a report with recommendations will be produced. Where it identifies improvements that can be made, these will be owned by the appropriate Director and will be tracked to ensure necessary changes are made, and are working effectively. They will provide regular updates to the Board as to how any recommendations are being implemented. Lessons will be shared with teams across the organisation, or more widely if appropriate.

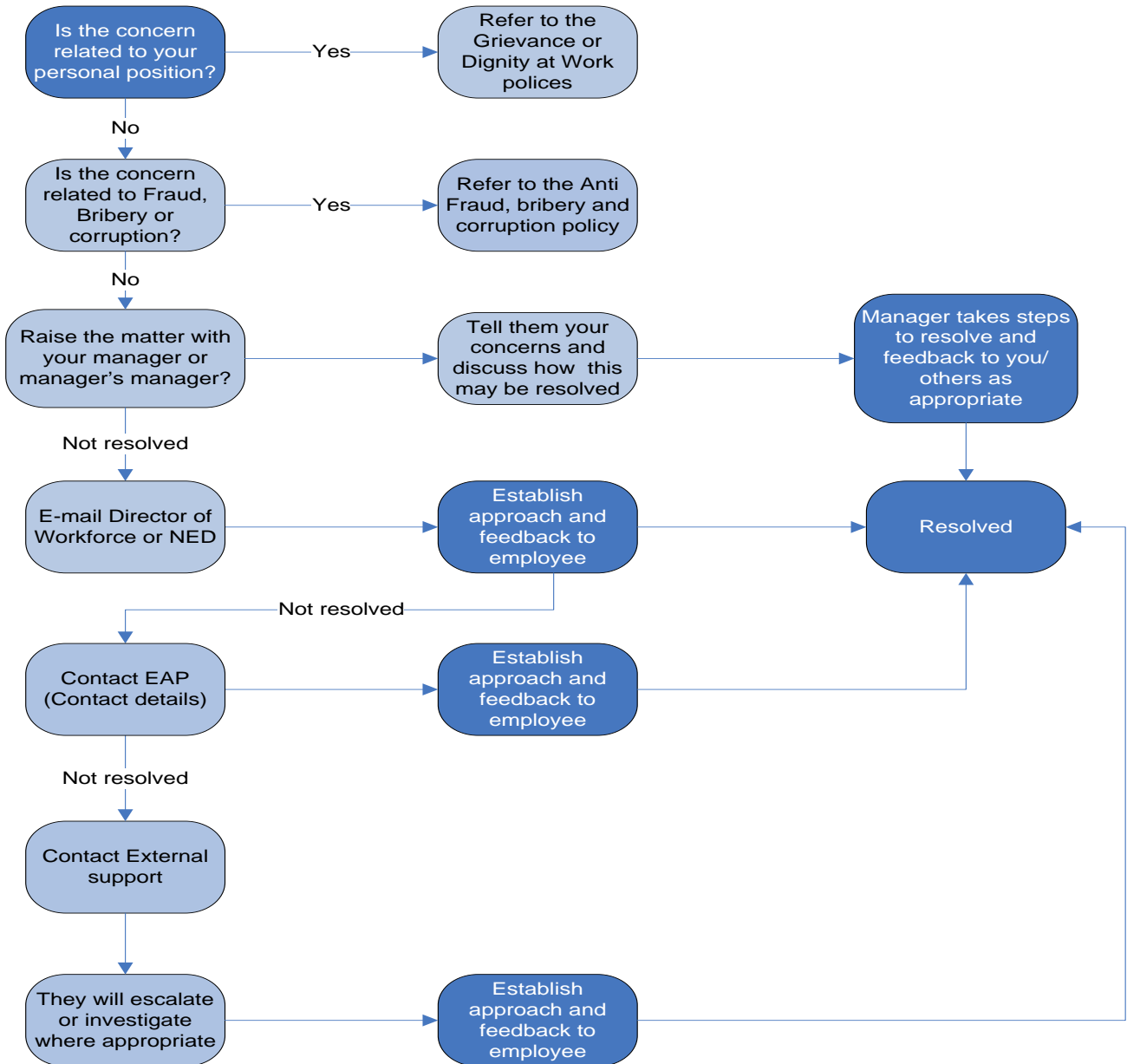
The Board and Governance Assurance Committee (GAC) will be given high level information about all concerns raised by our employees through this policy and what we are doing to address any problems. An annual report containing information on Whistle-blowing cases including for example investigation approach, outcome and recommendations will be produced for the board and GAC.

Employee Assistance

The Employee Assistance Programme is a telephone based resource, offering you confidential information available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This service provides specialist information and counselling services including finance, emotional issues, and law, education, health, work and family matters. Although the telephone service is accessible by you and members of your family, face to face service are only available to you as our employee. The service does not provide counselling or advice to those under 16, however, they will be signposted to an appropriate service for their needs.

Telephone: 0800 716 017 or visit the website: www.employeecare.com. The code to enter in both password and access code boxes is 72992.

3. Flowchart



4. Policy Approval and Review

Policy version	UCD/People/Whistle/009v1.0
Title	Whistle-blowing Policy
Approved by SPC	January 2018
Equality Impact Assessment completed	21 st February 2018
Counter Fraud check	16 th February 2018
This document replaces	Raising a Matter of Concern (Whistleblowing) Policy/021 Jan 2014v1.3
Effective Release Date	1 st March 2018
Review Date	March 2022
Author	Daryl Hall
Filepath	G/HR/HR/Everyone/Policies
Distribution	All Employees and Managers; available on People First