



# NET Whistleblowing Policy

## Document History

### Version History

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## 1 Introduction

Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual raises a genuine concern relating to a wrongdoing or suspected malpractice and/or covering up of a malpractice or wrongdoing occurring in an organisation. The alleged malpractice may be classified in many ways, for example, a violation of a law, rule, regulation and/or a direct threat to public interest such as fraud, health & safety violations and corruption.

Whistleblowing is distinct from both complaint and employment disputes or grievances that an individual may have. A complaint can be defined as an expression of personal dissatisfaction. Please refer to our Complaints Policy for further information.

An individual may decide to make a disclosure to us to prevent harm or to hold an organisation to account, but if the breach is regarding their own employment contract then it will be precluded as the company grievance procedure should be utilised for this, NET cannot look into any concerns to employment positions, contracts or grievances of this nature.

## 2 Purpose of this Policy

This policy sets out our approach to receiving information from those who wish to make certain disclosures to us on matters relating to NET centres, candidates or the public that have the potential to adversely affect the development, assessment or certification of assessments of occupational competence.

This policy is designed to encourage the whistleblower to feel confident to raise concerns and to provide an avenue for doing so. NET's commitment to responding to such concerns can be made without fear of reprisal or victimisation. If you have a genuine concern, then your disclosure should be made in the reasonable belief that it will tend to show malpractice or impropriety.

We would encourage you to first raise a concern internally within your organisation, however if you remain concerned or if your concern has not been appropriately addressed, or that you feel unable to raise a concern internally; please contact NET and follow the procedure outlined in this policy.

NET is committed to high standards of openness and accountability and we encourage centre staff, candidates and any other interested parties to come to us and voice their genuine concerns about any aspect of the development, assessment or certification of assessments of occupational competence.

## 3 How to Raise a Concern

You may notify us of a whistleblowing disclosure by contacting NET.

## 4 Process

- NET will ask you to provide us with sufficient information to enable us to effectively follow through on your disclosure, asking you to provide as much evidence as possible.
- NET will consider each disclosure sensitively and carefully, and decide upon an appropriate response. We may share with third parties information received in the disclosure where we consider it necessary to do so.
- NET will base any investigation on the disclosure given at the time. Any new information received after an investigation has commenced will be treated as a separate investigation.

There may also be occasions where it is not appropriate for us to investigate due to circumstances, such as the disclosure falling outside our remit. In this case we may recommend another course of action.

Due to the varied nature of whistleblowing disclosures, timescales for investigations may vary considerably. If you choose to make a disclosure to us, providing you have given your contact details, we will send you an initial acknowledgement within two working days. We will write to you again to confirm how your disclosure will be addressed.

NET reserve the right to cease corresponding with a whistle blower where we believe, in our reasonable opinion, the disclosure may be vexatious.

## 5 Confidentiality

NET will treat disclosures sensitively and as far as we are able, treat the information confidentially. We will endeavour to keep the identity of a whistle blower confidential, where asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this if doing so would hinder any investigation and we may need to disclose your identity if required by law.

Whistle blowers should be aware that identity may be recognised due to the circumstances of the disclosure, although we will endeavour to eliminate the risk. Please also be aware that the source of the information may be revealed during the investigation itself and in serious concerns they may be asked to provide a statement or even come forward as a witness.

NET recognises that the decision to report a concern can be difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the alleged malpractice or wrong doing. We will treat all disclosures within our control in confidence.

### **WHAT PERSONAL DATA NET COLLECTS AND WHO HAS ACCESS TO IT**

NET will ask for your name and contact details. We may also ask you for your organisation's name, although these are not mandatory. If you are worried about being identified as a whistle blower, you



can make a disclosure to NET anonymously. We treat anonymous disclosures just as seriously as those made openly. However, if you do make a disclosure anonymously, we may not be able to investigate your concerns as effectively. To ensure NET deals with your allegation equally and fairly, all disclosures, including those sent to board members, will be forwarded to the Operations, Quality and Verification Team for action.

Your information will be shared internally with limited NET staff in relevant departments in order that we can handle, investigate and respond to your disclosure.

NET may also share your information with other organisations, such as the regulators, government departments, enforcement agencies and the police if we think it is necessary to do so. There may also be certain circumstances where we are required, by law, to share your information.

## **6 Getting Advice**

If you need independent advice about whistleblowing issues you can telephone Public Concern at Work on 0207 404 6609 who offer free, confidential advice to people concerned about crime, danger or wrongdoing at work.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 exists to ensure that any worker, who discloses information, will be legally protected from being disciplined, dismissed or victimised by the employer as a result of their action. Protection under this legislation is a matter between the employer and worker and this Policy does not cover that relationship.

## **7 Contact Us**

If you have any queries about the contents of this policy, please contact NET on 0207 250 8510 or via email to [info@netservices.org.uk](mailto:info@netservices.org.uk) or submit in writing to NET, CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London, N1 6AH

## **8 About NET**

National Electrotechnical Training (NET) is an independent charity (Registered charity number: 1068863), which provides End Point Assessments for apprenticeship standards and assessments of occupational competence (AOC) in support of industry recognised qualifications utilised by the electrical installation, electrical maintenance and electrical engineering industries throughout the UK. More information about NET and its activities can be found on our website, [www.netservices.org.uk](http://www.netservices.org.uk)

## **9 Equal Opportunities**

We are fully compliant with equal opportunities legislation and this is reflected in all activities under our control and in our published material. A copy of our equal opportunities policy statement is available on our website.