

## Whistleblowing Policy

### What is whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the term used when a person passes on information concerning wrongdoing. In this guidance, we call that “whistleblowing reports” or “raising concerns”.

### Our Policy

The Engineering Professors’ Council (EPC) wants to encourage a trusting and supportive environment for all our members, employees, suppliers and wider stakeholders. The EPC takes malpractice or misconduct seriously and is committed to a culture of openness, trust and respect in which every stakeholder can report legitimate concerns and be assured of protection against victimisation.

Any person that raises concerns under this policy can be assured that any matter raised will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the concern.

We will listen to whistleblowing reports, treat them seriously, and try to resolve them as quickly as possible and learn from them so that we can continuously improve.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To enable the EPC to act quickly against any potential malpractice to ensure it conducts its business with the highest standards of integrity and honesty at all times;
- To identify risks that the EPC may not know about;
- To remind members, employees, suppliers, wider stakeholders and the public to speak out in confidence if they have concerns and to be assured that they do not need to provide evidence for their concerns to be raised; and
- To raise awareness of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Members, employees, suppliers and wider stakeholders should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- To reassure any person raising concerns that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation having made a disclosure in good faith;
- To highlight that there are other routes to raise concerns if a person feels that they cannot speak up

This policy and procedure sets out how the EPC will deal with whistleblowing contacts from its members, employees, suppliers, wider stakeholders and the general public.

### **What types of concerns are covered?**

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law, including but not limited to corruption, fraud or bribery
- a miscarriage of justice
- an act creating risk to health and safety
- an act causing damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public funds or other financial irregularities
- sexual or physical abuse
- other unethical conduct
- concealment of any of the above

This Policy cannot be used to question financial or business decisions taken by the EPC and nor should it be used to reconsider any personal grievances such as bullying, harassment and discrimination which are not covered by whistleblowing legislation.

If you are unsure about whether or how to raise a concern or want confidential advice about raising concerns about serious malpractice at work, you can contact the independent charity 'Protect', see [here](#) for contact details.

### **Confidentiality**

The EPC will ensure that all concerns raised will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, we may ask you to come forward as a witness. This policy encourages you however to provide your name and contact details on your concern whenever possible, if you do not do so we are unable to go back to you for further information, which can make investigating the concerns that were raised difficult.

Please note that you:

- must disclose the information in good faith
- must believe it to be substantially true
- must not act maliciously or make false allegations
- must not seek any personal gain.

The EPC recognises there may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and external authorities will need to become involved. Where this is necessary we reserve the right to make such a referral without an individual's consent.

### **Protection From Detriment**

Wrongdoing reported by an employee will typically (although not necessarily) be something they have witnessed at work.

With regards to employees, the EPC will ensure the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is applied in all cases. This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and may be amended or withdrawn at any time.

The EPC commits that no individual who makes a report under this policy will be subjected to any detriment as a result, in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996.

- in the event that a person believes they are being subjected to a detriment by any other person within the EPC as a result of their decision to disclose, they must inform the CEO and appropriate action will be taken to protect them from any reprisals
- if any person tries to discourage another employee from coming forward to express a concern, or criticises or victimises them after a concern has been raised, he or she may be subject to formal disciplinary action
- we will do everything possible to maintain confidentiality. However, there may be circumstances where the information may need to be discussed or disclosed to third parties, including other employees of the EPC, in order that the information may be properly investigated or as part of any disciplinary or criminal proceedings
- individuals qualify for whistleblower protection provided the disclosures made have a connection to the wider public interest.

### **Untrue Allegations**

If an individual makes an allegation or raises concerns in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and particularly if they persist with making them, action may be taken against that individual.

### **Resolving concerns and complaints**

As with many other organisations, most concerns that are raised can be quickly resolved through either a telephone call or email to one of the EPC team. We prefer to receive complaints in writing so if you make a complaint in person or over the phone you may be asked to follow this up in an email.

We keep a record of all correspondence relating to whistleblowing and the final outcome. We may report instances of whistleblowing to our Board of Directors but will never provide details of the content of the complaint or the complainant.

Any person raising concerns under this policy can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We will deal with your concern promptly and will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your sex or legal marital or same-sex partnership status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender (including gender reassignment, whether proposed, commenced or completed); sexual orientation; colour or race (this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality); disability; religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation or any other unjustifiable factors, for example language difficulties, age, pregnancy and maternity.

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction you will be provided with an opportunity to escalate the complaint within a reasonable timeframe. The process for escalation is provided in the Complaints Procedure below.

### **Policy Owner**

The current owner of this policy is the Whistleblowing Officer, Johnny Rich, CEO, who is responsible for reviewing the policy at every three years from date of last approved version.

A confidential log of all concerns raised will be kept by the Whistleblowing Officer and anyone involved in any concern raised will retain all relevant correspondence until after the completion of an investigation and all escalation routes have been exhausted, and the outcome of any investigation has been reported to the person who raised the concern.

Signed: