

# Whistleblowing Policy

## Policy statement

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This policy outlines how employees and stakeholders can raise concerns in relation to malpractice or wrongdoing within Partners 4 Training Ltd, especially where it relates to Department for Education (DfE)-funded provision.

We are committed to operating in a legal, ethical, and transparent manner and support a culture of openness where individuals feel confident to raise genuine concerns without fear of retaliation.

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE funding rules (rules 4.25 and 4.26) and applies to anyone carrying out work related to DfE-funded delivery.

## Scope and definition

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This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Workers
- Contractors
- Apprentices
- Volunteers involved in DfE-funded training
- Anyone with concerns about the conduct of individuals, systems, or processes related to our publicly funded work.

It is readily accessible and made available to all relevant parties. For the avoidance of doubt, whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected:

- Criminal activity or fraud
- Breach of legal or funding obligations (e.g., ESFA funding rules)
- Health and safety risks
- Safeguarding failures
- Misuse of public funds
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to cover up any of the above

This differs from grievances or complaints, which relate to personal issues and are covered by other procedures.

## Making an Internal Whistleblowing Disclosure

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If you have a concern, you should raise it promptly with our designated officer:

Designated Whistleblowing Officer

Name: Allison Faires

Role: Operations Director

Email: Allison.Faires@Partners4Training.co.uk

Alternatively, if you feel unable to raise the concern with the designated officer, contact the Deputy Whistleblowing Officer or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Concerns may be raised:

- In person
- By email or phone
- In writing
- Anonymously (though this may limit follow-up)

## Disclosure Handling

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We take all whistleblowing concerns seriously. Upon receipt:

- Acknowledgement: You will receive a written acknowledgement within 5 working days.
- Initial Review: A preliminary assessment will be completed within 10 working days.
- Investigation: If warranted, a full investigation will be carried out. You will be informed of the likely timescales.
- Outcome: You will be informed of the outcome where appropriate and legally possible.

All concerns will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

## Protection for Whistleblowers

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You are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) if you raise a genuine concern in the public interest.

We will:

- Not tolerate any victimisation, discrimination, or retaliation
- Keep your identity confidential where possible
- Offer support if you experience any detrimental treatment

Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who victimises a whistleblower.

## Escalating your Concern (External Disclosure)

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If you are not satisfied with how your concern is handled, or do not feel able to raise it internally, you may report it directly to the Department for Education or other appropriate body.

### External Whistleblowing Contacts:

- Blowing the Whistle to DfE (Gov.uk)  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/blowing-the-whistle-to-the-department-for-education>
- ESFA Complaints  
Email: [complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk](mailto:complaints.ESFA@education.gov.uk)
- Ofsted (Safeguarding and welfare concerns)  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/whistleblowing-about-ofsted>
- Whistleblowing for Employees (Gov.uk)  
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>
- Protect (Whistleblowing Charity)  
<https://protect-advice.org.uk>  
Helpline: 020 3117 2520

## Training and Accessibility

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This policy is made available to all new and existing staff involved in DfE-funded work.

It is published on our internal systems and, where appropriate, externally via our website.

Staff are reminded annually of how to raise a whistleblowing concern.

## Review

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All policies are reviewed annually as part of our quality management system and in response to legislative and industry updates by our DSL. This Policy was last reviewed on 28/07/2025 and will next be reviewed on 28/07/2026. Full details of reviews and updates to this Policy are detailed below.

Amendment reference	Amendment date	Amendment details	Section affected
1.0	28/07/2025	New Policy Created	Full Policy

Dated: 28/07/2025



Allison Faires  
Managing Director