



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to define whistleblowing, your confidentiality and sets out the procedure the IFA will follow when they receive a whistleblowing allegation. The IFA will consider the implication of an allegation and the adverse effects it has on the delivery, assessment and awarding of IFA Qualification(s) in accordance with the IFA's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

This document should be read in conjunctions with:

- Cheating and Plagiarism Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Sanctions Policy

2. DEFINITION

If an individual reports malpractice or the cover up of malpractice in the workplace or any other such wrongdoing, this is officially known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'; commonly termed as 'whistleblowing'. This provides protection of a person against repercussions for disclosing a wrongdoing in good faith by protecting the whistle-blowers identity. A disclosure for example might include:

- The Centre failing to comply with the IFA Centre Agreement or Centre Approval Criteria
- Actions leading to illegal financial gain
- A criminal act e.g., fraud or bribery
- Health and safety issues

For more information, please see the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#).

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to any and all participants in IFA Qualification(s), including learners, Centre staff and any additional site personnel who wish to raise a concern. Please note, 'whistleblowing' is different from raising a complaint. Complaints are an expression of personal dissatisfaction, for instance, with a service, and should be pursued following the IFA Complaints Procedure, which can be found on the IFA website. This policy does not apply to those who wish to raise concerns regarding the IFA (you will be directed to the IFA's Complaints Policy) or against examination results.

4. CENTRE RESPONSIBILITIES

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all personnel involved in the management, delivery and assessment of IFA Qualification(s), and learners, are fully conversant with this policy.

The Centre Agreement sets out Centres duties not to put the IFA in breach of fulfilling its regulatory obligations. It is therefore important that adverse effects, malpractice and/or maladministration incidents are notified to the IFA immediately.

The Centre must fully cooperate with any investigation which is instigated following disclosure by a whistle-blower and in keeping with the IFA's Malpractice & Maladministration Policy and this Whistleblowing Policy.

The Centre must ensure the whistle-blower is not subject to any prejudice as a result of making a disclosure.

All parties/personnel involved in the whistleblowing case must comply with the relevant legislation at all stages.

5. IFA RESPONSIBILITIES

Once a concern is raised the IFA have a duty to pursue the matter and it may not always be possible for a whistle-blower to withdraw their concerns once raised.

6. ANONYMITY/PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY

The IFA cannot accept anonymous allegations and will not act upon anonymous allegations, however the person making the allegation can have their identity protected. A person making an allegation of malpractice or maladministration may wish to remain anonymous if they are concerned that possible adverse consequences may occur if their identity is revealed. Please inform the IFA if this is the case.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information received during the disclosure process may be shared with the necessary third parties e.g., Sanctions & Complaints Committee.

The IFA will consider all disclosures as sensitively, carefully, and confidentially as possible to maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved. The Centre should also treat all details of allegations of malpractice as confidential to avoid damaging their own reputation.

The IFA will always aim to keep a whistle blower's identity confidential where asked to do so, although it cannot be guaranteed. The Case Examiners assigned to review the allegation will not reveal the whistle blower's identity unless:

- the whistle blower agrees or;
- doing so is necessary for the purposes of the investigation, or
- required to do so by the police, fraud and law enforcement agencies or
- in connection with court proceedings.

The IFA will inform you if your identity needs to be revealed for the above purposes.

Whistle-blowers should recognise however they may be identifiable by others due to the nature of their concern even though they are not named by the IFA.

Centres should also note that the IFA may not be able to disclose the source of information if an allegation is raised against them.

8. PROCEDURE

To raise a concern of malpractice and/or wrongdoing in relation to IFA Qualification(s) the individual must first contact the Centre. For Centre personnel this will be the Centre owner and for learner's their first point of contact is their principal tutor.

If the Centre does not address the concern or the individual does not feel they can raise the concern with the Centre, the individual will report it directly to the IFA by completing the enclosed form; providing as much information as possible. This form includes a signed written statement, request for supporting evidence, and disclosure of any personal interest the 'whistle-blower' may have in the outcome.

Depending on the nature of the concerns, it may not always possible for a whistle-blower to withdraw their concerns once raised.

We recommend you take advice before making an allegation and know your rights under the Act by visiting Public Concern at Work (www.pcaaw.co.uk) a registered charity and an independent authority on public interest whistle blowing.

9. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Once the IFA has received the completed form enclosed and supporting information surrounding the allegation, the IFA will acknowledge receipt within three (3) working days and instruct the Sanctions and Complaints Committee to initiate an investigation as per the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy procedures.

10. OUTCOME

It should be noted that the IFA will not disclose details of all the investigation activities. The whistle-blower will be informed of the investigation outcome, however, please note limited information will be provided to the whistle-blower to protect the confidentiality of the Centre.

11. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

This policy is reviewed annually as part of the IFA's cyclical self-evaluation, which considers operational feedback and effectiveness, learner and Centre feedback and good practice guidance from other awarding organisations, and/or trends identified from cases.

WHISTLEBLOWING FORM

Full Name		Membership No (if applicable)	
Address (for Correspondence)			
Role at the Centre (if applicable)			
Declaration of any personal interests			
Email			
Telephone			
Centre Name			
Please provide the following information accompanied by the relevant evidence			
Date of incident or when you became aware			
Name those who you feel were responsible/involved in the case			
Describe the incident and those affected, including any initial investigation findings			
Evidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Please attach any relevant evidence e.g., screen shots etc. to enable the IFA in their investigation.		
Signature		Dated	

The form must be completed in full and sent to office@ifaroma.org