

Raising Concerns at The Place: guidelines for staff

Introduction

- 1 All of us at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually, these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about serious malpractice like financial irregularities, dangerous working conditions, discrimination or fraud, it can be difficult to know what to do.
- 2 You may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to yourself, perhaps feeling it's none of your business or that it's only a suspicion. You may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or The Place. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way.
- 3 The Board of The Place has therefore introduced this "whistleblowing" procedure to enable you to raise your concerns about serious malpractice at an early stage. We want you to raise the matter when it is a concern rather than wait for proof. If in doubt – raise it!
- 4 This procedure should not be confused with The Place's [Public Complaints Policy](#) and [Grievance Procedure](#) or [Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#).. The Head of HR or Chief Financial Officer will advise you of the appropriate procedure if required.
- 5 This procedure is not for anonymous complaints.

How to proceed

- 6 Where you have a concern, we hope you will feel able to raise it with your line manager or at meetings such as departmental or team briefings and the Cross organisational groups. If you feel unable to follow that route, for whatever reason, you should follow the procedure below:

6.1 ***Concerns relating to financial misconduct***

Serious concerns relating to financial misconduct should normally be made to the Chief Executive or the Chief Financial Officer. If you feel unable to follow that route for whatever reason you should raise your concern with the Chair of the Audit Committee, Molly Jackson via the Head of Governance and Directors' Office, Amy Hubbard (amy.hubbard@theplace.org.uk)

6.2 ***Concerns relating to non-financial issues***

Serious concerns relating to non-financial issues should normally be made to the Chief Executive (whether or not you report directly or indirectly to the postholder) or the Chair of the Board, Roni Brown (roni.brown@theplace.org.uk).

If you feel unable to follow that route for whatever reason you should Raise your concern with the Chair of the Audit Committee, Molly Jackson (see above).

7 *What happens next*

Having alerted us to the concern, it is our responsibility to investigate the matter. The initial stage will be to discuss the matter with you and then assess what further action should be taken. We will ask you how you wish to see the concern resolved and whether you would want to be told about how we will conduct the investigation. If the person approached feels that the concern can be resolved quickly, or in a straightforward manner, it will be brought to the attention of the appropriate manager. The procedure may lead to other processes being implemented such as the disciplinary procedure.

8 *Assurances*

Concerns raised under the procedure will be treated seriously and sensitively. Where practicable, immediate steps will be taken to remedy the situation. However, the final outcome may take longer depending on the issue that is raised.

9 We will make every effort to keep your identity confidential if you wish this to be the case. If this is not possible, for example if you are asked to give evidence, you will be told and we will discuss the action with you. The earlier and more open the expression of a concern, the easier it will be to take action.

10 The Place takes malpractice seriously. Staff have a responsibility to raise genuine concerns about dangers to public health and safety, fraud and corruption, safeguarding, maladministration or other serious malpractice. This is consistent with the duty of registered charities to conduct their affairs in a responsible and transparent way and to take into account the requirements of their funding bodies and other regulatory bodies, together with the standards of public life enunciated in the reports of the Committee of Standards in Public Life (Nolan/Neill Committee).

11 The Place will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a concern under the procedure in good faith, regardless of whether or not it proves well-founded.

The purpose of this procedure is to enable you to raise your concerns within The Place in confidence without any fear of reprisal. In the first instance we ask that you do not take your concerns outside The Place except to [Protect](#) (Public Concern at Work) which will provide confidential advice. Its telephone number is 020 3117 2520

If after you have received advice from Protect you feel that you cannot bring your complaint directly to The Place you should contact the relevant prescribed person or body as stated here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>

- 13 You may raise your concerns accompanied by a colleague, who should be another employee of The Place.
- 14 When raising your concern, you must declare any personal interest you have in the matter. Your employment with The Place shall be fully protected unless the subsequent investigation indicates, and separate disciplinary proceedings find, that an allegation was made for malicious reasons and was without foundation.

15 *At the end of the process*

Where concerns have been raised, the person receiving them shall make a record of its receipt and the action subsequently taken. The result of the investigation will be reported to the Audit Committee and to yourself. Sometimes, however, it may not be possible to reveal the full extent of the investigation.

- 16 You will be given an explanation where action is not taken.

Laura Naldrett – Head of HR

April 2003/Reviewed June 2006/June 2014/June 2016/July 2018/Jan 20