

1

Employment principles

1.12 Whistle blowing

This section covers:

- Who does this cover?
- What is the policy
- Our assurances to you
- How will we handle this matter?
- How to raise a concern internally
- External contacts

Who does this cover?

This policy covers all employees of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. It also covers anyone else working on the Authority's premises including agency workers, independent consultants and contractors.

What is the policy?

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 unlawful conduct, illegality, financial malpractice or dangers to the public, employees or the environment, it can be difficult to know what to do.

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 to the organisation. You may decide to say something but find that you have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next. Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has introduced this policy, which reflects the legal framework and the legal obligations placed upon the Authority, to enable you to raise your concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. We would rather that you raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof. If something is troubling you which you think we should know about or look into, please use this policy. If, however, you are aggrieved about your personal position, please use the Grievance Policy - which you can get from your manager, HR officer or trade union. This Whistleblowing Policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk.

If in doubt - raise it!

Our assurances to you

Your safety

The Authority is committed to this policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in good faith, it does not matter if you are mistaken. Of course we do not extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue. In that case, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

1

Employment principles

1.12 Whistle blowing

Your confidence

We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (for instance because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed. Remember that if you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter or to protect your position or to give you feedback. Accordingly, while we will consider anonymous reports, this policy is not well suited to concerns raised anonymously.

How we will handle the matter

Once you have told us of your concern, we will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request it, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it.

When you raise the concern you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, we do ask that you tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Policy we will tell you.

While the purpose of this policy is to enable us to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. If requested, we will confirm our response to you in writing. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

How to raise a concern internally

Step one

If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager. This may be done orally or in writing.

For Members, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with the relevant Director. This may be done orally or in writing.

Step two

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with your Director. Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

For Members, if you feel unable to raise the matter with the relevant Director, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with the Chief Executive.

1

Employment principles

1.12 Whistle blowing

Step three

If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if the above are not appropriate to you (for example, you are a contractor or consultant) if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact:

Monitoring Officer

Rhiannon Edwards:

Rhiannon.Edwards@beacons-npa.gov.uk

Section 151 Officer

Emlyn Watkin:

emlyn.watkin@wyddgrug-llanrhystud.fsnet.co.uk

Chief Executive

John Cook: ext 247

John.Cook@beacons-npa.gov.uk

Independent advice

If you are unsure whether to use this policy or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact:

- ☐☐ if applicable, your union; *or*
- ☐☐ the independent charity Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609. Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work.

External contacts

Option 1

While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise such matters internally, we recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report matters to outside bodies, such as regulators or the police. Public Concern at Work (or, if applicable, your union) will be able to advise you on such an option and on the circumstances in which you may be able to contact an outside body safely.

Option 2

While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise such matters internally, we would rather you raised a matter with the appropriate “regulator” than not at all. Provided you are acting in good faith and you have evidence to back up your concern, you can also contact bodies such as the external auditors, relevant professional or regulatory bodies or organisations, your solicitor or the police (as appropriate).

What if I am still dissatisfied?

If you are unhappy with our response, remember you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this Policy.

While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, we will try to handle the matter fairly and properly. By using this policy, you will help us to achieve this.