



**WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

**Document control**

Audience	Internal colleagues, External colleagues, Customers
Application	This policy applies to all Achieve+Partners personnel and bodies that work with it
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**Document change record**

Changes to specific sections of the document are listed below:

Page	Section	Change
None to date		



## SECTION 1: POLICY

### 1.1 Introduction

This policy details Achieve+Partners' commitment to the provision of duty of care to apprentices and those that work with apprentices including customers, training providers and employers. Achieve+Partners have a positive commitment and open approach to whistleblowing.

This policy is designed for any individual who wishes to make a disclosure(s) relating for example to wrongdoing concerns, discrepancies, malpractice or maladministration in:

- + the development, delivery and award of end-point assessments
- + assessment arrangements on end-point assessments
- + conduct of assessments of End-Point assessments
- + other matters likely to be of relevance to Achieve+Partners in its role as an end-point assessment organisation.

### 1.2 Purpose

This policy sets out the conditions and arrangements that an individual must follow, in order to raise a whistleblowing concern relating to an end-point assessment for an apprenticeship standard. The policy also sets out the steps Achieve+Partners will take to respond, investigate and report the outcomes of an investigation into allegations and concerns.

### 1.3 Scope

This policy is relevant to any individual who has concerns about the quality or effectiveness of end-point assessment services for an apprenticeship standard provided by Achieve+Partners. Such concerns are raised as whistleblowing disclosures.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) amended the Employments Rights Act 1996 and created a right to redress, enforceable by tribunal, in the event of a worker being subjected to a detriment or dismissed by an employer as a result of whistleblowing. This policy outlines the protection available if a worker makes a whistleblowing disclosure. It gives only general information and does not aim to offer definitive legal advice or details of how the whistleblowing provisions work in practice.



Workers who ‘blow the whistle’ on wrongdoing at work have a right not to be dismissed or suffer any detriment at work as a result of making a “protected disclosure”. Workers include full/part time staff, contractors and temporary agency staff. To be protected by law, a worker must be making a disclosure of information which they reasonably believe is made in the public interest (in good faith) and which they reasonably believe is true and is a matter for which Achieve+Partners is potentially responsible. Our policy additionally covers any conduct which appears likely to, or may cause harm to, the reputation of Achieve+Partners.

Where an individual makes a disclosure relating to potential wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration the whistleblowing provisions of employment-rights legislation may protect them against being dismissed or penalised by an employer. We are unable to tell you whether any disclosure made will offer protection under the law. An individual must satisfy themselves that the protection will cover them and seek independent legal advice to support this.

If an individual is concerned about issues that are seen or heard regarding end-point assessment services, usually these concerns are easily resolved by following Achieve+Partners policies and procedures. However, those procedures may not appear to be appropriate where:

- + there is no relevant procedure; or
- + you have genuine concerns about using a procedure at either the outset or the end of the process; and
- + your concern is about conduct likely to harm the reputation of Achieve+Partners.

It can be difficult to know what to do in this situation. An individual may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to themselves, perhaps feeling it is not any of their business or that it is only a suspicion. Achieve+Partners have made this policy available to enable genuine concerns to be raised at an early stage and in the right way. Achieve+Partners would rather an individual raised the matter when it is of first concern, rather than wait for proof. Please also see the Achieve+Partners Malpractice and Maladministration Policy.

We would also encourage an individual to first raise a concern internally within your organisation where this is appropriate. If concerns about the response remain, or don’t feel able to raise a concern, you should follow the procedure outlined in this policy.

While the protections offered by whistleblowing legislation are aimed at workers, we will also investigate concerns raised by members of the public and others about potential wrongdoing, malpractice and maladministration in end-point assessments. In such cases, we will follow the processes outlined in this policy.



## 1.4 Definitions

Whistleblowing is a term used when an individual raises a genuine concern about suspected wrongdoing, concerns, malpractice or maladministration and/or the covering up of wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration that they become aware of through their work. The wrongdoing, concern, malpractice or maladministration often affects others, for example customers or members of the public.

For the purposes of this policy Achieve+Partners defines malpractice and maladministration in accordance with the General Conditions of Recognition:

- + Malpractice is defined as any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates – it also covers misconduct
- + Maladministration is any activity or practice which results in non-compliance with regulations, including cases of persistent mistakes or poor administration regarding end-point assessment provision.

Whistleblowing is distinct from both complaints and employment disputes or grievances that an individual may have. A complaint can be defined as an expression of personal dissatisfaction. Examples of complaints that we will normally investigate can be found in our Complaints Policy for conducting enquiries into complaints about end-point assessment services.

If an individual is unhappy with his or her own employment position or contract, they should take this up with their employer or another responsible body. We cannot investigate grievances of this nature.

## 1.5 Arrangements

Whistleblowing disclosures can be made by providing as much detailed information as possible, marked for the attention of the Quality Director and sent to Achieve+Partners at:

By post

Quality Director

Achieve+Partners

50 Holdings Road

Sheffield

S2 2RE

By email

[info@achievepartners.co.uk](mailto:info@achievepartners.co.uk)



Examples of whistleblowing disclosures to Achieve+Partners may include:

- + A worker making a disclosure about wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration they suspect in the provision of end-point assessment services
- + An apprentice making a disclosure about wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration in the provision of end-point assessment services they or others have received
- + A parent or employer making a disclosure about wrongdoing, malpractice or maladministration in the provision of end-point assessment services they or others witnessed, heard about or suspected
- + Information that prevents the provision of end-point assessment services from being discredited.

### Making a disclosure

Making a disclosure to Achieve+Partners will be in absolute confidence. Achieve+Partners have experienced staff to deal effectively with disclosures and will acknowledge receipt of a disclosure, including when to expect a response. Every effort will be made to respond to disclosures quickly and efficiently in accordance with the timelines listed below, where contact details have been provided. However, these may be subject to change where the situation may be complex. When this occurs Achieve+Partners will advise of the reason(s) why and the new timescale.

Acknowledgment:	Within 3 working days after receipt of the disclosure
Written outcome:	Within 28 working days from the date of the acknowledgement

### Investigating disclosures

Achieve+Partners will conduct a full investigation of any disclosure (for further details please see our complaints policy). We will also investigate anonymous whistleblowing disclosures however it may not always be possible to investigate or substantiate anonymous disclosures.

If you disclose your identity, it will be easier for us to:

- + look into the matter
- + protect your position
- + give you feedback where appropriate.

It is hoped that the assurances given in this policy will encourage individuals to disclose their identity to those who need to know. However, if an individual prefers to raise an issue anonymously, we will of course, consider the disclosure in accordance with this policy.



Each disclosure of information is considered sensitively and carefully, and an appropriate response and course of action will be constructed. We may share with third parties any information received in the disclosure where we consider it necessary to do so. In most cases, we will keep individuals updated as to what action is being taken in response to their disclosure. We will normally send you an update within 28 working days of receiving your disclosure, but this may take longer if the issue is particularly complex.

We may not always treat an allegation as a whistleblowing disclosure as it may be more appropriate to treat the disclosure as a complaint. There may also be occasions where it is not appropriate for us to investigate under certain circumstances. In this case we may recommend another course of action for an individual to take.

At the end of an investigation, if an individual is unhappy with the conclusion, they can write to the relevant regulators, explaining the dissatisfaction with the outcome and they may be able to investigate your concerns further.

### Confidentiality

Achieve+Partners will always endeavour to keep a whistleblower's identity confidential where asked to do so, although we cannot guarantee this, and we may need to disclose an identity to:

- + the police, fraud prevention agencies or other law enforcement agencies (to investigate or prevent crime, including fraud)
- + the courts (in connection with court proceedings)
- + another person or organisation to whom we are required by law to disclose your identity.

A whistleblower should also recognise that he or she may be identifiable by others due to the nature or circumstances of the disclosure.

### After the investigation

The Quality Director will ensure, to the appropriate extent, that the findings of the investigation are communicated to:

- + the whistleblower, as the person raising the concern, where identity has been disclosed
- + the individual(s) under investigation and if appropriate, other external authorities who may need to consider whether action should be taken because of the findings.



## SECTION 2: PROCEDURE

This section of the policy sets out the procedural steps for processing disclosures and investigations

Ref	Step	Owner	CCP
1	Applicant completes the whistleblowing form providing any supporting evidence as required.	Applicant	
2	Achieve+Partners acknowledges receipt of whistleblowing form within 3 working days of receipt.	Operations Director	
3	Operations Director reviews the whistleblowing to ensure that all necessary information has been provided.	Operations Director	
4	Operations Director contacts the individual submitting the whistleblowing to request further information if required.	Operations Director	
5	Quality Director review the whistleblowing and carries out any necessary investigations. This may involve further contact with the applicant submitting the whistleblowing form.	Quality Director	X
6	The Quality Director will agree with the Achieve+Partners Senior Management Team the appropriate response and associated actions.	Quality Director	
7	Quality Director will send Achieve+Partners response within 28 working days of the acknowledgement of receipt to the individual, this may involve a phone call to run through the detail of findings.	Quality Director	X
9	Agreed actions or improvement will be added to the Achieve+Partners Quality Improvement Plan and implemented according to its business priority.	Quality Director	
9	The Quality Director will carry out any further notifications to external quality assurance organisations, regulators, customers or apprentices as required.	Quality Director	
10	Should the applicant remain dissatisfied they can contact the regulator and/or external quality assurance organisation responsible for the apprenticeship standard.	Applicant	