WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY	
Responsible Officer	Governance & Compliance Manger
Group Owner	Executive Team
Date Created / Modified	May 2024
Version	1.4
Review Date	May 2026
Applicable for	This policy is mandatory. This policy applies to all those who work for England Netball whether full time or part time, self-employed, employed through an agency or as a volunteer. Our policy also applies to those supplying services to or on behalf of England Netball.
Summary	This policy provides information on England Netball's Whistleblowing Policy and explains how anyone connected with netball can raise concerns of malpractice, illegality or negligence.

VERSION CONTROL

PERSON RESPONSIBLE	VERSION AND SUMMARY OF CHANGES	DATE
Compliance Manger	Inclusion of 'untrue allegations' section Updated 'Raising a Concern' section Inclusion of 'Confidentiality' section	May 2020
Governance & Compliance Manager	Updates to 'What is Whistleblowing' section and Grammatical changes.	May 2022
Governance & Compliance Manager	No changes.	May 2024

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Appendix A - Guidance and procedure for managers when receiving a whistleblowing concern
Appendix B – Whistleblowing checklist information log

Purpose

1.1 England Netball sets and expects the highest standards of conduct from our staff, volunteers and contracted partners. This policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other existing procedures (e.g. complaints and feedback policy, safeguarding reporting and employment policies and procedures).

1.2 To assist England Netball to achieve high standards employees, volunteers and contracted partners need to be able to raise legitimate concerns about fraud, crime, breaches of policies and serious risks that undermine the reputation of England Netball.

1.3 We know that sometimes things may go wrong or that someone may ignore our policies, procedures or the law resulting in serious consequences. Experience shows that staff, volunteers or others who work on behalf of the organisation often have worries or suspicions. By reporting their concerns at an early stage, they can help to put things right or identify and stop potential wrongdoing.

1.4 Whistleblowing does not replace current England Netball policies and procedures. It is different from the grievance procedure which refers to an individual's personal employment relationship with their employer. Whistleblowing arrangements are not intended to give an individual a further opportunity to pursue a grievance once other relevant employment procedures have been exhausted.

1.5 England Netball whistleblowing arrangements do not replace the following:

- Child & Adult at Risk Protection & Safeguarding Reporting
- Disciplinary Regulations
- Codes of Conduct
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equality Policy

1.6 You should only consider raising concerns through whistleblowing arrangements if:

- You have genuine reasons why you cannot use the above policies and procedures.
- You have reason to believe that these policies are not being properly applied.
- There is a public interest aspect.

1.7 England Netball are committed to this policy. We take all concerns seriously and will not tolerate any reprisals such as harassment, victimisation or bullying, because of raising a concern in the genuine belief that it is, or maybe true.

1.8 In the event of you experiencing problems because of raising a concern, it will be treated under existing policies and procedures in place within England Netball.

Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all those who work for England Netball whether full time or part time, self-employed, employed through an agency or as a volunteer. Our policy also applies to those supplying services to or on behalf of England Netball.

2.2 If you are a member of the public with concerns or information which you think we should know about you should follow the England Netball complaints and feedback policy note. Advice on how to use this policy and raise your concern is available on the England Netball website.

2.3 This policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of existing procedures. England Netball also has a range of policies, codes, manuals and procedures, which set out the standards of behaviour expected of members, staff and volunteers. If you have a complaint about England Netballs services, policies, practices or disciplinary regulations please refer to these policies and procedures.

2.4 If you are a member of staff or a volunteer and have queries about the most appropriate course of action, you can get free, confidential practical advice from Protect which is an independent whistleblowing charity.

2.5 Protect
Telephone: Protect Advice Line: 020 3117 2520 (* option 1) Email Protect Advice line: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk

What is Whistleblowing

3.1 Whistleblowing is the formal way to raise a concern that is in the public interest. A whistleblower is a term used for a person who works or volunteers for an organisation and raises legitimate concerns about specified matters, known as qualifying disclosures. The whistleblower is not normally involved in the activity but wishes to alert others.

3.2 A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest if the whistleblower has a reasonable belief that there is a case of:

- fraud and/or money laundering;
- a bribe, offered or received;
- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- breach of any laws, regulations, other legal obligations or England Netball's policies or procedures; or
- other serious risk that threatens clients, colleagues, the public, the environment or England Netball's reputation; and
- concealment of any of the above; is being, has been, or is likely to be committed. It is not necessary for you to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. Please be aware that you have no responsibility for investigating the matter as it is England Netball's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

3.3 This policy provides you with a framework for raising concerns which you believe are in the public interest.

Our Commitment to you

Your Safety

4.1 If employees, workers or volunteers bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain circumstances under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. The law that protects whistleblowers is for the public interest, so that people can speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation.

4.2 We recognise that you may be worried about formally raising a concern for a number of reasons:

- Fear of reprisals or victimisation (e.g. loss of job)
- Too much to lose (reputation, damage to career)
- Feelings of disloyalty
- Worries about who may be involved
- Concern that there is no proof only suspicions
- Fear of repercussions if there is no evidence or you are proved wrong.

Your Confidence

4.3 We would like to assure you that if you raise a concern:

- 'Openly' - we will protect you from reprisals.
- 'Confidentially' - we will protect you from reprisals and will not disclose your identity without your consent, unless required by law. England Netball may have to breach confidentiality if we are required to report the matter to the police. Such a disclosure will be discussed with the employee or volunteer to minimise the impact.
- 'Anonymously' - Employees or volunteers can submit their concerns anonymously. However, they are encouraged to disclose their identity as this helps the investigation and allows for feedback.

Untrue Allegations

4.4 If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious or frivolous allegations, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, the England Netball disciplinary procedure will apply.

Raising a concern

5.1 You should consider raising concerns through the England Netball Whistleblowing Policy if:

- You have genuine reasons why you cannot use the above policies and procedures.
- You have reason to believe that these policies are not being properly applied.
- There is a public interest aspect.

5.2 England Netball are committed to this policy. We take all concerns seriously and will not tolerate any reprisals such as harassment, victimisation or bullying, because of raising a concern in the genuine belief that it is, or maybe true.

5.3 In the event of you experiencing problems because of raising a concern, it will be treated under existing policies and procedures in place within England Netball listed above in section 1.5.

5.4 We hope the assurances given in this policy allow you to raise your concern internally and openly. If you wish to raise the matter in confidence, please say so at the outset so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you choose not to identify yourself when reporting concerns, it may be more difficult to investigate and could be dismissed as being without any foundation. We hope that you will:

- Raise your concerns at an early stage
- Do not wait to prove your concern is well founded by investigating the matter yourself

Confidentiality

5.5 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if that is your wish. If disciplinary or other proceedings follow the investigation, it may not be possible to take action as a result of your disclosure without your help, so you may be asked to come forward as a witness. If you agree to this, you will be offered advice and support.

Step One

5.6 The seriousness of the issue may influence who you decide to raise it with. In the first instance, you should raise your concern with your immediate line manager. If this is not practical for whatever reason, please raise the issue with the Designated Officer as outlined in step two.

5.7 When raising your issue, it can be done verbally or in writing. We ask that you explain as fully as you can the information or circumstances that gave rise to your concern. If you have any personal interest in the matter, please inform this to whoever you are reporting the matter to.

Step Two

5.8 If you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager as described in step one, please raise your concern with the Designated Officer who has been given special responsibility in dealing with whistleblowing concerns.

5.9 The following person has been nominated and agreed by England Netball as the Designated Officer for whistleblowing.

Name: Compliance Manager
Contact: Whistleblowing Reporting Form
Email: Complaints@englandnetball.co.uk

5.10 If the concern or issue raised are about the CEO, the Chair of the Board will decide on what action should be taken and where appropriate how any investigation will proceed. The Chair of the Board can be contacted via the Company Secretary at:

Email: Company.secretary@englandnetball.co.uk

5.11 If employees or volunteers cannot go to their employer with the disclosure first or if they feel unable to use the organisation's procedure, the disclosure should be made to a prescribed person so that their employment rights are protected. Further details can be found at here under the whistleblowing list of prescribed people and bodies.

5.12 ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) provides free, impartial and confidential advice on whistleblowing. If you are unsure how to raise a whistleblowing concern, you can find further information on their website at www.acas.org.uk

Role of the Designated Officer

6.1 The Designated Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Whistleblowing Policy and will act as a point of contact for those wishing to raise a concern under the provisions of this policy.

6.2 Where concerns are raised with Line Managers as outlined in step one of this policy note, the issue or complaint will be copied to the Designated Officer (removing names if anonymity is requested). If the concern or issue raised is about the person nominated as the Designated Officer for England Netball, the Chair of the Board will decide on what action should be taken and where appropriate how any investigation will proceed. The Chair of the Board can be contacted via the Company Secretary at:

Email: Company.secretary@englandnetball.co.uk

6.3 Where concerns or issues are raised directly with the Designated Officer as outlined in step two of this policy note the following will apply: -

- An initial interview will be arranged (a neutral venue or remote interview can be arranged if required)
- The employee or volunteer will be asked if they wish to disclose their identity.
- The employee or volunteer will be asked if they wish to make a written or verbal statement.
- The Designated Officer will make notes from the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.
- Where illegal or dangerous activity has been alleged, it may be necessary to liaise with the police, social services or another government agency.

How we will handle the matter

7.1 Once you have informed us of your concern, it will be assessed to see what further action may be needed. The Manager or Designated Officer will listen carefully to your complaint and not prejudge the issue. It is helpful if the Manager or Designated Officer can establish the following information:

- When the concern first arose and where relevant, what prompted the decision to speak up
- Whether the information is first hand or hearsay
- When the approach is to the Designated Officer whether the employee or volunteer has raised the issue with their line manager. If not, why they did not feel able to and if they did what was the outcome?
- Whether confidentiality is sought. If so the extent and practicality.
- If the employee or volunteer is anxious about reprisals.

7.2 The recipient of the concern or allegation will acknowledge in writing within 10 working days that the concern has been received. If the issue has been raised with a line manager, they must send a copy of the concern raised to the Designated Officer. It may be necessary to remove the names to make it anonymous, if requested.

7.3 The response will depend on the nature of the concern and could be:

- Advice only
- Resolved by agreed action without the need for an investigation
- Investigated internally
- Referred to the safeguarding officer (child protection or vulnerable adults)
- Referred to the police
- Referred to the external auditor
- Subject to an independent inquiry

7.4 The whistleblower will be kept informed in writing on how the Designated Officer intends to deal with the issue raised. This will include:

- An estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response (where known).
- If initial enquiries have been made
- If further investigation is required. If not, why not (where appropriate)
- Who is investigating the issue or complaint
- Advised how we will inform you of progress

7.8 Whenever possible, we will give you feedback on the outcome of any investigation. Please note however, that we may not be able to tell you about the precise actions we have taken where this would infringe a duty of confidence to another person.

7.9 The whistleblowing law is contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). Public bodies are required to have a whistleblowing policy and ensure their employees are not victimised or dismissed for raising their concerns internally. This also applies to those who, as a last resort, feel the need to take their concerns to an outside body.

7.10 We welcome all genuine concerns and will treat your issues seriously. No action will be taken against you if you have raised a concern in the genuine belief that it is, or may be, true. If you knowingly make a false allegation you will not be eligible for protection under PIDA.

Manager Receiving the Whistleblowing Concern

8.1 Guidance on what managers should do if they receive a concern which falls under the whistleblowing policy in contained in Appendix A.

8.2 The guidance includes the procedure to follow when receiving a concern and a checklist log (Appendix B) with questions which will assist managers when speaking with the whistleblower.

APPENDIX A

Procedure for Managers Receiving a Concern These procedures should be used in conjunction with the whistleblowing policy.
Managers receiving the whistleblowing concern
It is important that you listen carefully to the concern being raised and do not prejudge the issue. If you are unable to do this, the employee should be encouraged to raise the concern with the Designated Officer as outlined in the Whistleblowing Policy.
Establish the details of the concern
The Manager receiving the concern should use and complete the whistleblowing checklist information log to assist with gathering all the necessary information. Submit this form, along with any initial findings, to the England Netball Designated Officer. Where you are unsure as to whether the concerns raised should be considered under existing procedures such as HR policies, safeguarding, Codes of Conduct or Disciplinary Regulations, seek advice from the Designated Officer as soon as possible.
What will happen next?

Once you have listened to and made notes about the concern explain to the whistleblower that:

- It will need to be assessed and consideration given to what further action may need to be taken.
- Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take.
- They will be told who is handling the matter and how you can contact them.
- If the concern raised falls more properly within an existing complaint or employment policies or procedures, they will be told.

Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) explained

PIDA provides protection when an employee reasonably suspects there is wrongdoing and makes an internal disclosure;

Disclosures to prescribed external regulators are protected where the employee reasonably believes that the information and allegation in it are substantially true;

Wider disclosures (to MP's and media) are only protected where there is a justifiable cause for going wider and where the disclosure is reasonable.

Appendix B
Whistleblowing Checklist Information Log

Area, Region, Club, League or head office:	
Name of manager receiving the concern:	
Name of employee or volunteer raising concern:	
Date:	
Has confidentiality been requested?	
If yes, please explain to whistleblower below***	

*** We will not disclose your identity, without your consent, unless required by law. Should this situation arise we will discuss with you how the matter can best proceed.

Questions

1. Please provide some background and history of the concern, stating where possible: • Names • Dates • Places Whether the information is first hand or hearsay if the concern is on-going
Notes

2. When did the concern arise and where relevant, what prompted the decision to speak up now?
Notes
3. What is the whistleblower concerned about?
Notes
4. Is the whistleblower anxious about reprisals? Please reassure: If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any reprisals such as harassment, victimisation or bullying. Provided you are acting honestly, it does not matter if you are mistaken or if there is an innocent explanation for your concerns.
Notes
5. Is there anything else relevant the employee wishes to mention?
Notes

Manager receiving concerns Signature	Employee or volunteer reporting concern Signature

The completed checklist information log should be forwarded to the Designated Officer as soon as possible.