

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. **ABOUT THIS POLICY**

- 1.1 We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.
- 1.2 This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, apprentices, casual workers and agency workers.
- 1.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

2. **WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING?**

- 2.1 Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

3. **HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN**

- 3.1 We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your line manager for any reason, you should contact the Whistleblowing Officer (Mr AZ Shenwari. Contact details are at the end of this policy.
- 3.2 We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a work colleague to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

4. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

- 4.1 We hope that you will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

5. **EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES**

- 5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

5.2 The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

6. **PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS**

6.1 We aim to encourage openness and will support whistle-blowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

6.2 Whistle-blowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Whistleblowing Officer immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

6.3 You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal.

6.4 However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

6.5 Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

7. **CONTACTS**

7.5 Your first point of call will be your line managers however; if they are not present then you may contact the following:

Whistleblowing Officer	Name: Mr AZ Shenwari Tel: 0121 772 8111 Email: shenwari@beststartlimited.co.uk
Whistleblowing Officer	Name: Mrs Yasmin Bi Tel: 0121 772 8111 Email: yasmin@beststartlimited.co.uk
Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 Email: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk