

Remedicare Education Services
Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

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1. Public Interest

Whistleblowing concerns must relate to matters that affect others or the wider organisation. The purpose of this policy is to protect learners, staff and the integrity of Remedicare Education Services by ensuring concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice or failures are addressed appropriately.

2. Introduction

Remedicare Education Services is committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding, professionalism, integrity and accountability.

As an Alternative Provision provider, we recognise that creating a culture where staff feel confident to speak up is essential in protecting learners, supporting staff wellbeing and ensuring continuous improvement.

All staff, including employees, agency workers, volunteers, contractors and visitors working on behalf of Remedicare Education Services, have a responsibility to raise concerns where they believe there may be:

- Unsafe practice.
- Safeguarding failures.
- Poor professional conduct.
- Breaches of legal or regulatory requirements.
- Risks to learners, staff or the organisation.

Remedicare Education Services promotes an open and transparent culture where concerns can be raised without fear of unfair treatment, victimisation or retaliation.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Staff Concerns and Conduct Protocol.
- Low-Level Concerns Procedure.
- Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Complaints Policy.

3. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage staff to report genuine concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure concerns are listened to, investigated and responded to appropriately.
- Provide clear guidance on how to raise a whistleblowing concern.
- Protect staff who raise genuine concerns in the public interest.
- Ensure safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately.
- Support Remedicare Education Services in identifying and improving unsafe practice.

Remedicare recognises that staff are often the first people to notice concerns and that speaking up plays an important role in maintaining a safe environment for learners.

4. Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all individuals working for or supporting Remedicare Education Services, including:

- Permanent employees.
- Temporary employees.
- Part-time employees.
- Agency workers.
- Volunteers.
- Contractors.
- Consultants.
- Students or trainees on placement.

All individuals have a responsibility to report concerns where they believe something may be unsafe, unlawful, unethical or inconsistent with Remedicare expectations.

5. What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is when an individual raises a concern about suspected wrongdoing, malpractice or risks within an organisation that affects others or is in the public interest.

A whistleblowing concern is different from a personal grievance.

Whistleblowing relates to concerns such as:

- Risks to learner safety or safeguarding failures.
- Abuse, neglect or harm to children.
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures.
- Unsafe working practices.
- Criminal activity.
- Fraud, financial misconduct or misuse of resources.
- Breaches of legal duties.
- Failure to follow statutory guidance.
- Serious breaches of Remedicare policies and procedures.
- Behaviour that could damage the organisation's reputation.
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing.

This policy should not normally be used for individual employment concerns such as:

- Personal disagreements.
- Pay disputes.
- Individual workplace complaints.
- Concerns about management decisions affecting only one person.

These concerns should normally be raised through the appropriate procedure, such as the Grievance Procedure or Staff Concerns and Conduct Protocol.

If a staff member is unsure whether their concern falls under whistleblowing, they should speak with a member of the Leadership Team or DSL team for advice.

What Whistleblowing is Not

Whistleblowing should not normally be used for personal employment concerns, such as disagreements with colleagues, individual workload concerns or personal grievances. These matters should be raised through the appropriate management process, including the Grievance Procedure or Staff Concerns and Conduct Protocol.

6. Safeguarding Whistleblowing Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

All staff must act immediately if they believe a learner may be at risk of harm or if they have concerns about safeguarding practice.

Examples of safeguarding whistleblowing concerns may include:

- A safeguarding concern not being acted upon appropriately.
- Failure to report concerns to the DSL.
- Concerns about how safeguarding records are managed.
- Unsafe practice involving learners.
- Concerns about staff behaviour towards learners.
- Failure to follow risk assessments or safeguarding procedures.
- Concerns about professional boundaries.

Staff should normally raise safeguarding concerns with:

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs):

- Jenny Marshall
- Della Isaacs
- Lilly Isaacs

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs):

- Jamie Wykes
- Andre Welds
- Phoebe Jerman
- Emily Freemantle
- Sophie Grove
- Zara Hancock
- Karis Smith
- Charlie Attewell

Service Directors / Safeguarding Oversight:

- Marina Logan
- Holly Awford
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Director of Education:

- Jack Hardy

Escalation of Safeguarding Concerns

Where a staff member believes that a safeguarding concern has not been appropriately responded to, or where the concern relates to a member of the safeguarding team, they must escalate the concern to an alternative senior leader.

Depending on the nature of the concern, this may include:

- Another Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- A Service Director.
- The Director of Education.

Where a concern relates to a senior leader, or where a staff member believes internal safeguarding procedures have not been followed appropriately, advice should be sought from the appropriate external safeguarding partner.

This may include:

- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the concern relates to an allegation against a member of staff.
- Local Authority safeguarding teams where there is concern about a child's safety or welfare.
- Other relevant safeguarding partners where appropriate.

Staff must not ignore concerns or assume that someone else has taken action. All safeguarding concerns must be reported and escalated until the concern has been appropriately addressed.

7. Concerns About Senior Leaders, Directors or Safeguarding Personnel

Remedicare Education Services recognises that staff must feel confident and supported to raise concerns, regardless of the role, position or seniority of the individual involved.

All staff have a responsibility to report concerns where they believe there may be unsafe practice, safeguarding failures, breaches of professional standards or any behaviour that may place learners, staff or the organisation at risk.

Concerns must always be raised through the appropriate route and should not be ignored or delayed because the concern relates to a senior member of staff.

Concerns Regarding Staff Members

Where a concern relates to a colleague, staff member or volunteer, this should normally be reported to:

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- A Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)
- A Service Director

The concern will be reviewed and managed in line with Remedicare Education Services' safeguarding procedures, Staff Concerns and Conduct Protocol, and relevant policies.

Concerns Regarding a DSL or DDSL

Where a concern relates to a member of the safeguarding team, staff should report the concern to an alternative safeguarding lead or senior leader.

This may include:

- Another DSL/DDSL
- A Service Director
- The Director of Education

The concern will be managed sensitively and appropriately, ensuring that safeguarding responsibilities remain effective and that any potential conflicts of interest are avoided.

Concerns Regarding a Service Director

Where a concern relates to a Service Director, the concern should be raised with:

Director of Education – Jack Hardy

The Director of Education will ensure that the concern is reviewed appropriately and that any required action is taken.

Concerns Regarding the Director of Education

Where a concern relates to the Director of Education, staff should raise the concern through an alternative appropriate route.

Depending on the nature of the concern, this may include:

- The relevant safeguarding partner.
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where the concern relates to an allegation involving a person working with children.
- Other appropriate external professional bodies where required.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO manages allegations and concerns relating to adults working with children

Wokingham:- lado@wokingham.gov.uk - 01189 088002

West Berkshire:- lado@westberks.gov.uk - 01635 519700

Safeguarding Escalation

Where a staff member believes that:

- A safeguarding concern has not been appropriately responded to.
- A concern has not been escalated appropriately.
- Safeguarding procedures have not been followed.
- The concern relates to a person responsible for managing safeguarding.

They must escalate the concern to an alternative senior person.

Staff must continue to raise concerns until they are satisfied that appropriate action has been taken.

No member of staff should feel unable to raise a safeguarding concern due to the position or seniority of the person involved.

Confidentiality

All concerns raised under this section will be handled confidentially and information will only be shared with individuals who need to know in order to respond appropriately.

Records will be maintained securely in line with:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK GDPR
- Remedicare Education Services confidentiality procedures

Remedicare Leadership Structure for Escalation:

Director of Education

Jack Hardy

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Service Directors

Marina Logan

Holly Awford

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Designated Safeguarding Leads / Deputy DSLs

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All Staff

8. Confidentiality and Anonymous Reporting

Remedicare Education Services understands that staff may feel worried about raising concerns.

All whistleblowing concerns will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Where possible:

- The identity of the person raising the concern will be protected.
- Information will only be shared with individuals who need to know.
- Records will be stored securely.
- Staff will be informed about the progress and outcome where appropriate.

Staff are encouraged to provide their name when raising concerns, as this allows Remedicare to:

- Seek further information if required.
- Provide updates.
- Ensure appropriate support is offered.

Anonymous concerns will still be considered and investigated where possible.

However, anonymous concerns can sometimes make it more difficult to fully investigate or provide feedback.

9. Investigation Process

All whistleblowing concerns will be taken seriously and considered carefully.

Once a concern has been raised, Remedicare Education Services will:

1. Acknowledge receipt of the concern where possible.
2. Complete an initial review to determine the appropriate response.
3. Decide whether the matter requires:
 - a. Internal investigation.
 - b. Safeguarding action.
 - c. External referral.
 - d. Management action.
 - e. Further advice from external professionals.

The investigation may involve:

- Reviewing relevant records.
- Speaking with individuals involved.
- Gathering additional information.
- Seeking advice from appropriate external agencies.

Where concerns relate to safeguarding, Remedicare will follow safeguarding procedures and make referrals where required.

Staff raising concerns should understand that confidentiality may prevent full details of outcomes being shared.

10. Safeguarding Concerns and External Referral

Where a whistleblowing concern identifies a potential risk of harm to a learner, safeguarding procedures will take priority.

Remedicare Education Services will take appropriate action, which may include:

- Consultation with safeguarding partners.
- Referral to children's social care.
- Referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Contacting emergency services where there is immediate risk.

All staff have a responsibility to act if they believe a learner may be at risk.

Staff must not:

- Delay reporting a safeguarding concern.
- Attempt to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves.
- Discuss concerns with individuals who do not need to know.

Safeguarding concerns must be reported through the appropriate safeguarding routes.

11. Protection and Support for Whistleblowers

Remedicare Education Services is committed to protecting staff who raise genuine concerns.

Staff who raise concerns in good faith will not be:

- Dismissed because they raised a concern.
- Treated unfairly.
- Subjected to bullying, harassment or victimisation.
- Disadvantaged because they spoke up.

Raising a concern does not mean that the concern must be proven correct. Staff are encouraged to report concerns where they have a genuine belief that something may be wrong.

Any attempt to retaliate against a person who raises a whistleblowing concern will be treated seriously and may result in action under the Staff Concerns and Conduct Protocol.

12. Malicious or False Concerns

Remedicare Education Services recognises that concerns may sometimes be raised which are not substantiated.

A concern that is not proven does not mean it was raised incorrectly.

However, where an individual deliberately raises a false, malicious or dishonest concern with the intention of causing harm, disciplinary action may be considered.

Staff must raise concerns responsibly and honestly.

13. External Whistleblowing Routes

Remedicare encourages staff to raise concerns internally wherever possible.

However, staff may seek advice or raise concerns externally if:

- They feel unable to raise the concern internally.
- Their concern has not been appropriately addressed.
- The concern relates to serious safeguarding failures.

External support includes:

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

Telephone: 0800 028 0285

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line provides support for individuals who have concerns about safeguarding practice or child protection failures.

Protect

Protect provides confidential advice for individuals considering whistleblowing.

Website: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Where concerns relate to allegations about staff working with children, advice should be sought through the appropriate LADO process.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The LADO manages allegations and concerns relating to adults working with children

Wokingham:- lado@wokingham.gov.uk - 01189 088002

West Berkshire:- lado@westberks.gov.uk - 01635 519700

14. Records Management

All whistleblowing concerns will be recorded securely.

Records will include:

- Date the concern was raised.
- Nature of the concern.
- Actions taken.
- Decisions made.
- Any referrals or external advice received.
- Outcome where appropriate.

Records will be managed in line with:

- Data Protection Act 2018.
- UK GDPR.
- Remedicare confidentiality procedures.

Information will only be shared with those who require access as part of their professional responsibilities.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

Director of Education – Jack Hardy

The Director of Education has strategic oversight of Remedicare Education Services and is responsible for:

- Promoting a culture of openness, transparency and accountability.
- Ensuring effective whistleblowing arrangements are in place.
- Ensuring concerns raised through this policy are appropriately reviewed and responded to.
- Providing oversight and challenge regarding safeguarding, educational practice and organisational standards.
- Ensuring concerns involving Service Directors are appropriately managed.
- Supporting learning and improvement following investigations.

Service Directors – Marina Logan & Holly Awford

The Service Directors are responsible for:

- Supporting the implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring staff feel confident to raise concerns.
- Responding appropriately to concerns raised by staff.
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately.
- Working alongside the Director of Education where concerns require strategic oversight.
- Maintaining confidentiality and appropriate records.

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)

The DSL team is responsible for:

- Supporting staff who raise safeguarding-related whistleblowing concerns.
- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly.
- Making referrals where required.
- Maintaining accurate safeguarding records.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Speaking up when they have concerns.
- Reporting unsafe practice.
- Following safeguarding procedures.
- Maintaining confidentiality.
- Supporting a culture where concerns can be raised safely.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where required due to:

- Changes in legislation.
- Updates to statutory guidance.
- Learning from incidents.
- Changes to Remedicare procedures.

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Appendix 1 - Staff Whistleblowing Declaration

I confirm that I have read and understood the Remedicare Education Services Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure.

I understand that:

- ☐ Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- ☐ I have a responsibility to report concerns about unsafe practice, wrongdoing or safeguarding failures.
- ☐ I understand how to raise a whistleblowing concern.
- ☐ I understand that concerns will be treated confidentially.
- ☐ I understand that I will be supported when raising genuine concerns.
- ☐ I understand that failing to report safeguarding concerns may place learners at risk.

Staff Name: _____

Job Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____