Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all of its business activities. The company recognises that staff, contractors, and temporary workers may become aware of wrongdoing that could have a detrimental impact on the organisation, its employees, or its clients. This policy provides a clear and confidential process for reporting concerns about unethical behaviour, malpractice, or violations of law without fear of retaliation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, temporary staff, and any individuals working on behalf of Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD, hereafter referred to as "employees". It provides a framework for reporting serious concerns, including but not limited to:

- Criminal activities or violations of law.
- Fraud, financial mismanagement, or corruption.
- Breach of company policies, procedures, or ethical standards.
- Health and safety violations or risks.
- Discrimination, harassment, or other unethical treatment of employees.
- Environmental damage or non-compliance with environmental laws.
- Misuse of company resources or assets.
- Any other serious misconduct that could harm the company, employees, clients, or the public.

Policy Statement

Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD is committed to:

- Encouraging employees to speak up about any concerns they may have regarding unethical behaviour or illegal activities.
- Treating whistleblowers with respect and ensuring they are not penalised or retaliated against for making a report in good faith.
- Investigating any reports thoroughly, fairly, and promptly.
- Ensuring that any issues raised are addressed appropriately, while maintaining confidentiality where possible.

Reporting Concerns

Employees are encouraged to raise any concerns as soon as they become aware of potential wrongdoing. Concerns should be raised through one of the following channels:

1. Internal Reporting

- **Line Manager or Supervisor**: If the issue concerns a day-to-day matter, employees are encouraged to first approach their line manager or supervisor.
- **HR Department**: For more serious or sensitive issues, or if the concern involves the line manager, employees may approach the Human Resources (HR) Department directly. The HR team is available to handle whistleblowing reports with confidentiality and impartiality.
- **Designated Whistleblowing Officer**: Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD will appoint a designated Whistleblowing Officer who is responsible for overseeing the handling of whistleblowing cases. The Whistleblowing Officer can be contacted via [whistleblowing@recruitmentsolutionssw.co.uk].

2. External Reporting

If an employee feels uncomfortable raising concerns internally, or if they believe that their concern has not been addressed appropriately, they may report their concern to an external body such as:

- The **Independent Whistleblowing Helpline** (for reporting fraud, serious misconduct, or malpractice in the public or private sector).
- Relevant industry regulatory bodies, if applicable.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD will make every effort to protect the identity of the whistleblower and maintain confidentiality. However, there may be circumstances where full anonymity is not possible, especially if further investigation or legal action is required. In such cases, the company will consult with the whistleblower to determine the best way forward.

Employees who raise concerns can choose to remain anonymous when making a report, although providing contact information may help with the investigation. The company will respect the privacy of individuals involved and take appropriate steps to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

Protection from Retaliation

Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD strictly prohibits any form of retaliation against an employee for making a whistleblowing report in good faith. Retaliatory actions include, but are not limited to:

- Dismissal.
- Demotion or disciplinary action.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Intimidation or victimisation.

Any employee who believes they have been retaliated against for raising a concern should report this immediately to HR or the Whistleblowing Officer. Retaliation will be taken very seriously and may lead to disciplinary action.

Investigation and Resolution

All whistleblowing reports will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Once a report is received, Recruitment Solutions (South West) LTD will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the report.
- Assess the concern to determine the appropriate course of action.
- Investigate the matter in a fair, impartial, and confidential manner.
- Provide the whistleblower with an update on the outcome of the investigation, where possible.

Depending on the nature of the concern, the investigation may result in corrective action, disciplinary measures, or referral to law enforcement or regulatory authorities.

False or Malicious Allegations

Employees are expected to raise concerns in good faith. False, malicious, or vexatious claims will not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action. However, if an employee makes a report honestly, even if it turns out to be incorrect, they will not face any adverse consequences.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Employees**: To report any concerns about wrongdoing or unethical behaviour.
- **Line Managers/Supervisors**: To listen to and support employees who raise concerns and to escalate issues appropriately.
- **HR Department**: To maintain a record of whistleblowing reports, provide advice, and ensure that investigations are conducted.
- **Whistleblowing Officer**: To oversee and manage whistleblowing cases, ensuring compliance with this policy and safeguarding the process.

Review of Policy

This Whistleblowing Policy will be reviewed periodically by the management team to ensure it remains relevant and effective. Updates will be communicated to employees as appropriate.

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