**Power Athletics Whistle Blowing Policy**

Power Athletics Cheerleading
Date of Next Review: July 2021
Reviewed by: Sian Young on 11/07/2020

**This procedure applies to anyone who works for Power Athletics, whether on a paid or voluntary basis.**

The aim of this procedure is to provide a clear and transparent way for anyone who works with Power Athletics to raise genuine concern about any acts of wrongdoing or malpractice in the workplace. It also aims to deal with concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.

This procedure provides managers with steps to deal with allegations, ensuring that staff and volunteers are not penalised for raising genuine concerns, even if those concerns prove to be unfounded. It also provides the means for taking disciplinary action against any employee who is found to have raised false concerns with malicious intent.

This procedure does not apply to child protection concerns or allegations of possible abuse by a member of staff or volunteer. Concerns or allegations of this nature should be dealt with following our Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, details of which can be found on our website. If you wish to use an official form to document the initial concern please use our complaints form, which can be found at the bottom of our Complaints Procedure.

If a member of staff or volunteer has a concern about malpractice:

* Speak to the Head Coach or Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). If your concern relates to either of those people, you should speak to the other or another competition coach.
* The Head Coach or DSO will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. This meeting can take place away from our training spaces if necessary. If a junior coach raises a concern and is under 18, a parent or guardian will be requested to be present at this meeting.
* You will be told at the meeting, or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address your concern. It may not be possible to tell you full details of the outcome, as it could relate to confidential third party information. If no action is taken in relation to your concern, you will be informed of this with supporting reasons.
* If you do not want the person you have concerns about to know your identity, please make this clear to the investigator at the earliest opportunity. Every effort will be made to respect your wishes, but it cannot be guaranteed that your identity will not be disclosed. If this is the case, you will be informed and any issues you have with this will be discussed with you.
* If you need support raising your concern, you may bring a work colleague with you to the meeting with the investigator.

What to do if someone raises a concern with you about malpractice:

If someone tells you they are concerned about the actions of another staff member or volunteer, you should arrange to meet with them as soon as possible. If you are not this person’s supervisor or manager then you should find out why they have chosen to discuss this concern with you. You may suggest that they should speak to their manager, but should not refuse to hear what they have to say.

You should approach the discussion sensitively, recognising the discomfort that the person may feel. Offer to meet them away from the workplace if they wish and allow them to bring another work colleague (insist on a parent or guardian being present if the reporting person is under 18). You should also remind the person with the concern about other sources of support available to them. Some are listed at the end of this document.

If the reporting person wants their identity to be kept confidential explain that every effort will be made to do this, however it may not always be possible.

Make notes of your discussion and check the accuracy of those notes with the individual reporting the concern.

Deciding what action to take:

Once you have established the nature of the concern, it may be of a relatively minor nature and you may decide to resolve it informally.

If the concern seems more serious, you must consider first whether any immediate action is needed to protect children or vulnerable adults. If so, consult the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure available on our website.

You should also consider whether there is a need to involve the police and/or other statutory services (eg health). If so, you should contact the Head Coach or DSO to discuss the matter further.

If you are not the manager of the concern reporter, you should refer the matter to the person’s manager, who will decide on what action to take.

Conducting an investigation

Unless the matter is relatively minor and can be dealt with informally, the responsible investigator should arrange for an investigation to be completed as soon as possible. The investigation should be demonstrably thorough and impartial.

The scope of the investigation will be determined by the nature of the concern. Witnesses may need to be interviewed and records may need to be scrutinised. It is also possible that advice may be needed from someone with specialist knowledge of human resources.

Once the investigation is completed, a report should be produced summarising the nature of the concern, the investigation process and the outcome, including specific recommendations.
Power Athletics will take every measure to preserve the anonymity of the person who raised the concern, if it is their wish. If concerns are not upheld, this should also be made clear.

If the concern in upheld and the person at the centre of it is found to have been culpable or remiss in some way, the report’s recommendations should be carried out in a clear action plan. The plan may include the use of disciplinary action, training, coaching, counselling, the implementation of new policies or procedures for the whole workforce, or a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

If it becomes apparent during the course of investigation that a criminal offense may have taken place, the police should be informed straight away. At this stage Power Athletics’ investigation may have to be suspended on police advice.

The person who raised the concerns should be told of the outcome, but not any details of disciplinary action. It may be necessary to offer support or counselling to the reporter.

If the concern is unfounded and the person who raised the concerns is found, through the process of investigation, to have acted maliciously or out of a desire for personal gain, it may be appropriate to consider disciplinary action against them.

**Recording concerns**

The investigator should make accurate notes of each stage of the process, including discussions during meetings, regardless of whether the concern is dealt with formally or informally.

Copies of these notes should be given to the person who is the subject of the concern. The person who raised the concern should also be given notes following their discussion, but not of those with the subject of the concern.

Notes made during the investigation and the report of the investigation, together with any notes relating to the outcome, should be kept on the file of the person at the centre of the concern. If requested, these notes should not reveal the identity of the person who reported the concern.

**Further advice and guidance**

Charity Commission: 0845 300 0218

Public Concern at Work: 020 7404 6609