

2015-10-06

## WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

### 1 Introduction & Purpose

- UWC RCN is committed to the highest standards. As part of that commitment, all staff, with serious concerns about any aspect of their work have a right and duty to come forward and express those concerns without fear of reprisal, victimisation or harassment. In most cases, concerns or complaints will be dealt with through other procedures, such as those for resolving grievances, disciplinary matters or concerns relating to discrimination. However in some cases, it is recognised that staff will want to come forward on a confidential basis (whistleblowing). This policy is to make it clear that this can be done without fear of reprisal, victimisation or harassment.

### 2 Consultation and Information

- UWC RCN will ensure that every new member of Support and Education Staff, temporary or permanent, is made aware of all requirements and expectations encoded in the Personnel Handbook (posted on w4) in operation at the time.
- Staff are protected when they make a disclosure of information which they reasonably believe indicates one or more of the following matters. This list is not exhaustive:
  - a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or likely to be committed;
  - a colleague has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he/she is subject;
  - a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
  - that the health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered;
  - the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged;
  - that any of these matters has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.
- It should be noted that in making a disclosure the member of staff must have a reasonable belief that the information disclosed shows one or more of the matters listed above. The belief need not be correct but the member of staff must show that he/she held the belief and that it was a reasonable belief in the circumstances at the time of the disclosure. The only additional requirement on the member of staff is that he/she should act in good faith. UWC RCN will not tolerate malicious or vindictive disclosures and if such a disclosure is made the individual(s) involved will be subject to action under disciplinary procedure.

- In addition to the above, UWC RCN expects and encourages members of staff to come forward with disclosures if they suspect:
  - fraud, corruption or malpractice;
  - failure to deliver approved standards of safeguarding;
  - damaging personal conflicts at senior level;
  - bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the workplace;
  - serious breaches of the standards set out in the Personnel Handbook.
- Education and Central Management team members notified of a concern have the responsibility to:
  - ensure that concerns raised are taken seriously;
  - where appropriate, investigate properly and make an objective assessment of the concern;
  - keep the member of staff advised of progress;
  - ensure that necessary action is taken.

### **3 Confidential Reporting**

The law protects employees against unfair dismissal or being subjected to detriment as a result of a protected disclosure. If anyone tries to prevent a member of staff from coming forward to express a concern, this may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

### **4 Whom to Contact**

- In most cases, the member of staff should be able to raise any concerns with his/her line manager. If for some reason this is not possible (for example, if the staff member reasonably believes his/her line manager to be involved in the wrong-doing), an approach should be made directly to the next person in line management (ref. UWC RCN Organisational Chart – available on Staff Notice Board and on w4).  
If necessary, the member of staff should ask for a confidential meeting.
- A member of staff may also in the first instance report a concern to one of the College's Verneombuds (Health and Safety Representatives).  
These concerns should be put in writing and include, insofar as it is possible, some background, relevant dates and the reason why the situation has caused concern. The recipient of the information will acknowledge the concern within 48 hours. If a meeting or interview is held to discuss the concern, this will usually be done within 14 days. At this meeting, the member of staff raising the matter may be accompanied by a verneombud, work colleague or a Union Representative.

**5** This Policy has been approved by UWC RCN's Board (September 2015) and the AMU Committee (October 2015) and will be reviewed annually – during Staff Introduction Week (early August) by the Deputy Rektor and updated as appropriate.