

Tees Rowing Club

Whistleblowing Policy



April 2019

Whistleblowing Policy

1. Contents

Sections 2 to 8 of this document comprise the Tees Rowing Club Whistleblowing Policy as defined under Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which came into force on 2 July 1999. The Act protects workers who disclose information about malpractice at their current or former workplace, provided certain conditions are met. For the purposes of this policy the workplace includes that of Tees Rowing Club as well as off-site locations related to competition and training.

Section 9 of this document provides guidance to those who wish to disclose information about malpractice within another British Rowing affiliated club or a British Rowing event.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all employees, athletes, contractors and volunteers within Tees Rowing Club. Personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, discrimination) are not normally covered by this policy, these are covered by Tees Rowing Club's Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure. Concerns regarding the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults should be dealt with under the Club's Safeguarding and Welfare Policy.

3. Introduction

All employees, athletes, contractors and volunteers within Tees Rowing Club in any capacity, at one time or another may have concerns about what is happening. It is the duty of everyone to speak up about genuine concerns. These concerns are usually best resolved by having a conversation with their squad leader or coach.

When disclosing a concern, an employee, athlete, contractor or volunteer must reasonably believe two things:

1. That they are acting in the public interest; and

2. that the disclosure may fall under one or more of the following headings of malpractice (the list is not exclusive):

- a criminal offence e.g. fraud;
- betting, corrupt conduct, inside-information and match fixing;
- someone's health and safety is in danger e.g. coercion of an athlete to train against medical advice or conducting an unsafe-practice;
- risk or actual damage to the environment;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an organisation is breaking the law e.g. incorrect or inadequate insurance cover; or
- covering up wrong-doing, such as fabricating test results or supporting cheating (sport rule violation, anti-doping rule violation).

Employees, athletes, contractors and volunteers may be worried about raising such issues or may want to keep the concerns to themselves, perhaps feeling that it is none of their business or that it is only a suspicion. They may feel that raising the matter would be disloyal to fellow members, volunteers or to Tees Rowing Club. They may decide to say something but find that they have spoken to the wrong person or raised the issue in the wrong way and are not sure what to do next.

Tees Rowing Club takes any form of misconduct seriously and has introduced this policy to enable employees, athletes, contractors and volunteers to raise concerns early and in the right way. We encourage all individuals, where appropriate, to raise the matter as a concern rather than wait for proof.

4. Assurances to employees, athletes, contractors and students

4.1. Commitment

The Committee of Tees Rowing Club is committed to this policy. If a genuine concern is disclosed under it, Tees Rowing Club will use all reasonable endeavours to protect the position of the individual raising the concern, provided they are acting in good faith. This assurance does not apply to someone who maliciously raises a concern that they know is untrue.

The daily environment for a Tees Rowing Club employee, athlete, contractor or volunteer may be challenging following a whistleblowing disclosure, both whilst the disclosure is being investigated and following the conclusion of the process. If the individual feels that his or her environment is not tolerable, discussions should take place with the Captain. Tees Rowing Club will seek to either redeploy that individual, suitably change their environment, or ensure that they are not disadvantaged as a result of making the disclosure.

4.2. Confidence

Tees Rowing Club does not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that someone may wish to raise a concern in confidence. If an individual asks us to protect their identity we will not disclose it without their consent. If the situation develops and Tees Rowing Club is not able to resolve the concern without revealing their identity (for instance because evidence is required in court), we will consult with the individual on how they would like to proceed.

Tees Rowing Club recognises that if we do not know the identity of the person disclosing a concern, it may be more difficult to resolve the matter: however, we will always endeavour to balance this with the needs of the individual raising a concern.

5. Procedure

Once Tees Rowing Club has been made aware of a concern we will make an initial assessment in order to decide what action should be taken. This may involve:

- an internal investigation; or
- an external review or investigation completed by independent experts who are not involved in the operation of Tees Rowing Club.

The person disclosing will then be made aware of who is handling the concern and how they can be contacted and whether they will be required to assist in the future. A Panel will then be formed

based on the needs of the case, which will be composed of those who have the knowledge required to fairly assess the disclosure.

Tees Rowing Club will act as quickly as possible to resolve the matter though the time taken to come to a resolution will depend on the nature of the disclosure. If appropriate and confidentiality allows, the person disclosing may be kept informed though this may not always be possible.

When person raising a concern may be asked how they feel the matter might best be resolved. At this stage, we must be made aware of any personal interest in the matter. If the concern is deemed to be covered more appropriately by the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure or the Safeguarding and Welfare Policy, we will make the individual aware and direct them to the relevant procedure or policy. Records of disclosures will be kept in accordance with applicable law.

6. Raising a concern internally

Those who have a concern about misconduct would ideally raise it in the first instance with their squad leader or coach. This may be done orally or in writing. The person disclosing must state whether they wish to raise the matter in confidence so the appropriate arrangements can be made.

If after following these concerns the person disclosing feels the matter has not been addressed, or if they feel that the matter is so serious that they cannot discuss it with any of the above they should contact the Captain.

If the person disclosing is still not satisfied with the decision making process or the action taken they can go to the other levels of escalation detailed in this policy (see section 9 below).

7. Raising a concern externally

Some professions, such as medicine and physiotherapy, have statutory duties to inform certain categories of disclosure externally. In disclosure cases such as criminal misconduct, child or vulnerable adult abuse, all employees, athletes, contractors and volunteers must inform the regulatory authorities without undue delay.

The disclosure process when dealt with internally by Tees Rowing Club may be duty bound to report this externally to statutory bodies.

8. Keeping the Committee of Tees Rowing Club informed

The Captain will notify the Chair of Tees Rowing Club when a whistleblowing case has instigated a Panel investigation. Details of the case will not be discussed at that stage. Once the Panel findings are concluded, the Committee of Tees Rowing Club will be fully informed, in confidence.

9. Raising a concern about malpractice at an affiliated club or regatta¹

If you want to raise a concern about a club other than Tees Rowing Club or an event at another club, you should refer to the [British Rowing Whistleblowing Policy](#).

¹ Regatta includes any affiliated event or competition subject to British Rowing rules or regulations

You should also refer to the British Rowing policy if you wish to escalate a concern that you have raised within Tees Rowing Club if you are not satisfied with the outcome or the way the concern was handled.

10. Further Information

For your information some regulatory statutory bodies are listed below:

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>)

These Regulatory statutory bodies have individual policies and procedures for handling concerns and complaints. Many of their websites contain guidance on issues that you may face which may be helpful in your initial deliberations on whether to make a disclosure.

The Information Commissioner

In relation to compliance with the requirement of legislation relating to data protection and to freedom of information. Email: casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk and the website is www.ico.gov.uk

The Health and Safety Executive

This relates to health or safety of individuals at work or the health and safety of the public that is work-related, in connection with those industries and work activities for which HSE is the enforcing authority. Online form: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/raising-your-concern.htm> and the website is www.hse.gov.uk

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Matters relating to child welfare and protection. Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Care Quality Commission

Matters relating to the provision of health and social care. www.cqc.org.uk

General Medical Council

Matters relating to the registration and fitness to practise of a member of the medical profession. www.gmc-uk.org

Health and Care Professions Council

Matters relating to the registration and fitness to practise of health and care professional (eg physiotherapy). www.hpc-uk.org

Appendix to this policy:

- Internal Flowchart

