

# WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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## **PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

England Athletics is committed to offering the highest quality of service provision across grassroots athletics and running in England.

Our four values of FUN, INTEGRITY, INSPIRATION, and INCLUSIVITY ensure our staff work continually to achieve these benchmarks by working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect.

England Athletics works hard to provide an efficient and effective service to all. However, we recognise that there may be occasions where we or others fall short of expectations and individuals may not be completely satisfied.

However, some complaints may need to be dealt with under a separate process. For example, Safeguarding issues or Athlete selection.

Whistle blowing does not replace the other current England Athletics complaints and disciplinary policies and procedures.

## **SCOPE**

This policy outlines the process by which any individual involved at any level of the sport of athletics can raise concerns with England Athletics for investigation.

This policy is intended to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of existing procedures. England Athletics also has a range of policies, codes, and procedures, which set out the standards of behaviour expected of members, staff, and participants.

If you have a complaint about England Athletics services or policies, please refer to these policies and procedures

## **DEFINITION**

‘Whistle Blower’ is a term commonly used to describe a person who alerts an authority to an act of wrongdoing, usually by someone within the authority’s jurisdiction. Whistle-blowers are witnesses to a malpractice and must not be penalised for any disclosure of information, in fact certain categories of whistle-blowers are protected by the law. England Athletics is committed to encouraging a culture of openness: to uphold the reputation of the organisation, maintain the

sports and the public's confidence, and to protect its members (i.e., athletes, coaches, staff, officials, volunteers etc.). It is in the interests of the sport and its membership that individuals with genuine concerns can raise them in a confidential and effective way. This policy outlines the mechanism by which serious concerns can be lodged with England Athletics and addressed appropriately. Anyone approaching England Athletics, in good faith, with information regarding matters of wrongdoing, such as fraud, misappropriation, bad practice in child (and/or adult at risk) protection or safety, discrimination or breach of codes of conduct, by staff (including contractors) or volunteers working for EA Athletics, will have the matter dealt with in an appropriate manner with a duty of care to all those involved.

## PROCESS

If you discover any serious wrongdoing, and wish to whistle blow you should report it to the England Athletics Membership Service Manager using any of the following methods:

- Via post to: England Athletics Membership Services Manager, England Athletics, Athletics House, Alexander Stadium, Walsall Road, Perry Barr, Birmingham, B42 2BE.
- Via email to: [whistleblowing@englandathletics.org](mailto:whistleblowing@englandathletics.org)
- Via telephone (secure, recorded voicemail service) by calling: 0121 347 6543

You will receive a written receipt, usually within 48 hours (if received during business hours), which will outline the proposed next steps and timeline. Should you raise your concerns via telephone message service, a member of our team will call you back to discuss the complaint in person, usually with 48 hours of receipt.

Your concerns will normally then be considered by the Club Standards and Compliance Manager in the first instance and referred for investigation to a relevant staff member with responsibility for that area.

The relevant staff member will investigate the matter and take any remedial action to rectify the situation or, where any such action is not in the power of that staff member, they will then make recommendations to take appropriate further steps. Any investigation will not, at any stage, be carried out by any person against whom allegations are made, and details will only be shared with those individuals who are considered vital to the effective functioning of any investigation.

In some instances, particularly those involving child safety, it may be necessary to refer the matter to an external authority, for example the police. If this is the case both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint has been made will be notified of this unless England Athletics is prohibited from doing so by law or at the direction of the external authority.

If after initial investigation it is felt, there is an example of serious misconduct the investigating officer will begin the England Athletics Disciplinary policy.

## Escalation

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your whistleblowing concern, the matter can be escalated to the Chair of the England Athletics board (or to the chair of the Audit and Assurance committee if there is conflict).

Any person approaching England Athletics with genuine concerns will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against in any way because of the disclosure. However, England Athletics will take a serious view and act, accordingly, including taking disciplinary action against appropriate parties, should it be found that the allegations have been intentionally portrayed as untrue or have been raised maliciously. Individuals are therefore encouraged to put their name to any disclosure. Allegations raised anonymously may be investigated depending on the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern, and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

## Confidentiality

Where possible confidentiality will be maintained, although it must be stressed that in serious cases of fraud and in cases of child protection it will be not always be possible to maintain strict confidentiality if the concerns reach the investigation stage.

## Monitoring and Review

England Athletics is committed to continuous improvement and will record and monitor complaints to enable a continual review of its processes and procedures.

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**NB. The contents of this policy will be subject to revision from time to time.**

### Version Control

Issue Number	Date of Issue	Updated by	Update	Communication channel
1	Nov 21	Emma Davenport	Created	Email, Website,
2	August 22	Emma Davenport	Audit & Assurance Reviewed Inclusion of the escalation process	Website
3	Aug 23 Aug 23 Sep 23	Emma Davenport Audit & Assurance Board		Staff via HR newsletter. Website