



## Speak Up Policy

The Post Office is committed to conducting business with the highest standards of honesty, integrity and openness where our colleagues feel able to raise concerns internally.

### Main topic areas

- Policy statement
- Confidentiality and protection of workers
- Underpinning legislation
- When should concerns be raised?
- How should concerns be raised?
- How will concerns be dealt with?

### Getting help

**In the first instance, any queries relating to this policy should be directed to your line manager.**

Line managers can obtain advice by contacting the MY HR Help Adviceline

Colleagues should call

/

Alternatively visit the My HR Help website.

<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to all colleagues of the Post Office.
	This policy is effective from 01 April 2012.
	This policy does not form part of contracts of employment. We reserve the right to amend this policy from time to time.
<b>Policy statement</b>	<p>The <i>Speak Up Policy</i> sets out the process by which workers, i.e. colleagues and others who are contracted to personally perform work on behalf of the Post Office, can raise concerns in confidence and if required, anonymously about serious malpractice in the organisation in the knowledge that concerns will be acknowledged and action taken where appropriate.</p>
	<p>Any worker who raises a legitimate concern in good faith under this process will not in any way be liable to disciplinary action or loss of benefits, rights or prospects as a result of their action.</p>
	<p>Disciplinary action may be taken against any worker who is shown to have used these procedures to make malicious or misleading allegations.</p>
<b>Confidentiality and protection of workers</b>	<p>Confidentiality is not the same as anonymity. Workers who raise concerns are sometimes understandably concerned about their position, and may wish to remain anonymous.</p>
	<p>However, it is often difficult to conduct an effective investigation without being able to discuss it fully with the person who raised the concern. The helpline staff will ask callers if they are willing to provide a contact name and number, but callers do not need to provide contact details.</p>
	<p>Although the business will attempt to investigate anonymously raised concerns wherever possible, practical difficulties may prevent investigations from being undertaken in certain cases.</p>
<b>Underpinning legislation</b>	<p>Workers are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA), which provides workers with the right not to suffer any detriment or dismissal by the employer if they raise a concern which qualifies as a protected disclosure.</p>
	<p>PIDA identifies protected disclosures as those which are made in good faith and are reasonably thought to show one or more of the following:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed</li> <li>• That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he /she is subject</li> <li>• That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur</li> <li>• That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be at risk</li> </ul>

- That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged; or
- That information about any of the above matters is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

A disclosure will not qualify as protected if the person making the disclosure commits an offence by making it.

**When should concerns be raised?**

Workers should raise a concern if they are aware of, or suspect, wrongdoing which affects others (eg. customers, members of the public, colleagues or the Post Office).

Some examples of situations where a worker may raise a concern are:

- Fraud
- Giving or taking of bribes
- Financial malpractice
- Misreporting
- Practices that might put individuals or the environment at risk

**How should concerns be raised?**

In the first instance workers should raise concerns with their line manager, or a senior HR manager in the Post Office. They will either act on the information given to them, or pass it to the relevant person who can deal with it.

It is recognised that sometimes raising a concern directly with the business will not be possible, for example, if the worker considers that the line management may be involved in the issue or if they have a concern about confidentiality.

In such instances workers should contact the "Speak Up" confidential reporting line, which is run by InTouch MCS Ltd, an independent company. Access to the reporting line can be made by phone or via an on-line web service. InTouch will treat concerns in complete confidence and the worker does not have to provide contact details.

The worker will be requested to provide information about their concern, for example the history of the concern, relevant individuals and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation.

There is no requirement to provide contact details. However, not providing details may reduce the business' ability to make a thorough investigation into the concerns raised. All calls to the Speak Up line will be acknowledged within five working days.

**How will concerns be dealt with?**

Details of the concern raised will be forwarded to the Post Office who will act on it in the most appropriate way. Any resulting investigations will be made by people with appropriate authority who have the technical and professional knowledge needed for the particular case.

It is possible that the business may wish to directly contact the worker to request additional information. This will be done only where the worker has given express consent and are happy for a representative from the Post Office to

Speak directly to them. In all cases the individual's concern will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

Where concerns about serious malpractice are raised through other routes, such as other business helpdesks, and the concern would appear to be sufficiently serious to be covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act, this should be investigated and managed in line with this policy.

#### Investigation outcome

The Post Office does not have to inform a worker who raises a concern the outcome of any investigation and in some cases the Post Office may need to protect confidentiality or rights of other individuals and workers. However, the Post Office may provide an update on progress where this is deemed appropriate.

#### Responsibilities

##### Executive Team

- Approval of the Speak Up Policy
- Ensuring that resources are made available within the Post Office as required

##### Risk and Compliance Team

- The development and maintenance of the Speak Up Policy
- The development and maintenance of the framework and associated high level processes
- Coordinating the receipt of cases from the Post Office's helpline provider and reporting back on progress and outcomes
- Reporting incidents and outcomes to the Audit and Risk Committee and to CEC
- Chairing a working group consisting of the subject matter experts, to ensure that serious claims are effectively investigated
- Contractual management of the 3rd party helpline provider

#### Where to go for more information

##### Speak Up (whistleblowing)

To report a concern:

- Telephone **GRO** and choose to either speak to an operator, or leave a voicemail message
- Alternatively leave a message using the confidential on-line web based service using [www.intouchfeedback.com/royalmail](http://www.intouchfeedback.com/royalmail)

If clarification is required as to whether or not a claim raised by a colleague is relevant to the *Speak Up Policy*, email [riskandcompliance@GRO](mailto:riskandcompliance@GRO) or contact the Risk and Compliance team.

##### Bullying & Harassment Helpline

A free helpline, operated by an independent company, to offer confidential advice relating to bullying or harassment concerns:

Telephone: **GRO**

**Grapevine**

To report any information about a crime relating to the Post Office:

Telephone:

**Forms**

There are no forms relevant to this policy.

**Related  
documents**

There are no related documents to this policy.