

**Whistleblowing/Protected Disclosure Policy**

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. NAPA will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.

Date of last review: 05/12/2021

Contents

[Introduction](#introduction)
[How this policy can help you](#howthispolicy)
[Who can use this policy?](#whocanuse)
[What is whistleblowing?](#whatiswhistleblowing)
[NAPA’s assurance to you](#napasassurance)
[How to raise your concern?](#howtoraise)
[How NAPA will handle your concern](#hownapawillhandle)
[Investigation timeframes](#timeframes)
[What to do if you are unhappy with how your concern has been handled](#whattodoifyouare)

**Introduction**NAPA is firmly committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics, honesty, openness and accountability, and recognises that all of its employees have an important role to play in achieving this goal.All of us, at one time or another, may have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about breaches of the law, serious misconduct by another person, human slavery, health and safety, financial malpractice or other malpractice or wrongdoing impacting on others, it can be difficult to know what to do. The aim of this policy is to encourage anyone, whether internal or external to NAPA, to report any suspected wrongdoing and to provide guidance as to how to raise any such concerns. **How this policy can help you**If you have any genuine concerns about malpractice at work, which you believe are in the public interest to disclose, the Protected Disclosure Policy enables you to raise it in an appropriate and effective way. It is a confidential mechanism for you to raise any concerns you might have about malpractice at work. The policy is designed to protect you, if you are raising a genuine concern, from detriment and unfair dismissal in compliance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (commonly known as the ‘Whistle blowing Act’).However, it should not be seen as a channel to raise matters in relation to your own personal circumstances or terms and conditions of employment. In those cases you should refer to NAPA’s Grievance Policy or NAPA’s Bullying and Harassment Policy.

**Who can use the Whistleblowing/Protected Disclosure Policy?**NAPA encourages an open culture with all employees and everyone with whom with whom it comes into contact. This includes casual, temporary agency staff, freelancers, trainees, outreach staff and contractors, who feel they need to raise certain issues relating to NAPA in confidence. **What is Whistle Blowing?**The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 came into effect on 1 July 1999. This Act sets out a framework to promote the responsible and protected disclosure of concerns on the following matters:

* That a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
* That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with legal obligations to which they are subject
* That a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur
* That the health and safety of an individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
* That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
* That information tending to show any matter falling within the matters above has been, is being or is likely to be concealed

If you have a genuine concern relating to any of the above, which you reasonably believe is in the public interest to disclose, you should report it under this policy.

As set out above is this policy is not a substitute for the NAPA’s Grievance Policy or NAPA’s Bullying and Harassment Policy.

Anyone who abuses the procedure under this policy, for example by maliciously raising a concern they know to be untrue, will be subject to disciplinary action.

**NAPA’s assurance to you: Your protection**
The board of trustees, the Chief Executive and the senior leadership team at NAPA are committed to the principles of the Whistle Blowing Policy. You can be assured that your position will not be at risk if you raise a genuine concern.

NAPA does not, of course, extend this assurance to someone who acts improperly and raises a matter they know to be untrue.

**Your confidence**

NAPA will not tolerate any sort of victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern and anyone responsible for doing so will be subject to disciplinary action.

You may decide that you want to raise your concern in confidence. You can do so by asking for your identity to be protected, therefore it will not be disclosed without your consent. If a situation arises where it is not possible to deal with your concern without revealing your identity, for instance because your evidence is needed in court, you will be involved in a discussion to decide the best way to proceed.

Although you can raise a concern anonymously, including your contact details may make it possible to carry out a more in-depth investigation of the concerns you are raising.

**How to raise your concern**

**Step 1: Internal Heads of Department and Chief Executive**

If you have a concern about malpractice, hopefully you will feel able to raise it first with your Head of Department or the Chief Executive. This may be done orally or in writing - if you are raising a concern via writing please provide details of how you can be contacted.

At this point please try to clearly state the detail of what you are concerned about. This is also your opportunity to outline how you would like your concern to be investigated, as well as if you have a direct or personal interest in the matter.
 **Step 2: Alternative Internal Contacts**

If you feel unable to raise your concern with someone in your immediate line management, for whatever reason, you can contact, in confidence, any of one NAPA’s board of trustees.

If you want to raise the matter in confidence, practical measures will be put in place to protect your identity. You will be contacted in confidence and your identity will not be disclosed without your consent unless it is required by law.

**Step 3: External Contacts**

As NAPA is a registered charity – you can email the Charity Commission’s confidential whistleblowing address: whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk and answer these questions:

* What is the name of the charity? Include its registration number if it’s registered.
* What is your name?
* What is your telephone number? Only include this if you would be happy for us to contact you directly - for example, it is not a work environment.
* What is your role at the charity? If you no longer work for the charity, please tell us when you left.
* Are you a charity employee or a volunteer?
* What is your concern?
* What impact does it have on the people the charity helps, its assets, services, staff or reputation?
* Have you followed your charity’s complaints procedure or raised it with the charity’s trustees? What was the response? If you have not raised it with your charity, please explain why not.
* Have you contacted other organisations, like the police or HMRC? Include reference numbers, the name of who dealt with it, and their response if you have.
* Do you give permission to us to reveal your identity to the charity’s trustees?
* If you attach evidence to your email, how is it relevant to your concern?

**How NAPA will handle your concern**Once you have reported your concern, NAPA will assess what action should be taken. If your concern can be better dealt with under other NAPA policies (e.g. Grievance, Harassment Policies) you will be given support and advice on what to do next.If your concern can be handled under the Whistle Blowing Policy NAPA will then initiate an enquiry over your reported concern. It is at this point NAPA will:

* Tell you who is handling the matter and how you can contact him or her
* Say whether further assistance may be requested
* Provide an estimation of how long the investigation will take
* Advise on what to do if the person raising the issue suffers from immediate or subsequent detrimental action

While the purpose of this policy is to enable NAPA to investigate possible malpractice and take appropriate steps to deal with it, we will give you as much feedback as we properly can. Please note however, that we may not be able to tell you specific details of the investigation or the precise action that is being taken to resolve the concern under circumstances where it could infringe a duty of confidentiality owed by us to someone else. You should treat any information you are given about the investigation as confidential.

**Investigation Timeframes**The timeframes for investigating concerns raised under this policy are likely to vary depending on the nature and complexity of the case. However NAPA undertakes to operate within the following guidelines:-To acknowledge the receipt of a concern raised under this policy within five working days-To prioritise and progress the investigation appropriately-To ensure that the person raising the concern is provided with regular updates, including a three weekly update following an internal case review.-To aim to conclude investigations, where practicable, within a twelve-week timeframe, including feedback to the whistle blower.**What to do if you are unhappy with how your concern has been handled**Whilst NAPA cannot guarantee that it will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, the matter will be handled fairly and properly. If you are unhappy with NAPA’s response, remember you can go to the other levels and bodies detailed in this policy. By following the steps in this policy, you will help us to achieve this.