



Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Whistleblowing is when individual/s know or suspect serious wrongdoing within organisations and they report such activity internally to the employer, or externally to the relevant authority.
- 1.2. Somerset County Cricket Club expects all colleagues to recognise and understand their obligations and responsibilities to the Club, the public and each other and to provide consistently high standards of performance and conduct at all times, in accordance with our values, codes of conduct and policies.
- 1.3. The Club is committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability and developing a culture where people feel confident and safe to raise concerns about unacceptable practice and wrongdoing. We encourage anyone who has concerns about any aspect of the Club's work to come forward and voice their concerns in a safe environment.
- 1.4. This policy details the ways in which anyone involved with the Club can raise legitimate concerns and the protections provided to them in doing so.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all SCCC employees, managers, directors, casual workers, consultants, volunteers, players, agency workers and contractors.
- 2.2. It also applies to anyone not employed or contracted by the Club in a work capacity, such as members, visitors, partners, sponsors, suppliers and any other third party. From here on, the word 'colleague' will be used to encompass all stated stakeholders.
- 2.3. This policy applies to work carried out at the County Ground, Taunton Vale Sports Club or any other venue where Club activity takes place.
- 2.4. The policy covers the actions of third parties such as suppliers, service providers, and clients, as well as our staff. Should you have concerns about a third party, you are encouraged to raise them with us before approaching anyone else.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. All colleagues have a responsibility to report concerns promptly and appropriately in line with this policy, to enable efficient and effective resolution.
- 3.2. Senior leaders, directors and managers have a specific responsibility to:
 - 3.2.1. operate in accordance with this policy;
 - 3.2.2. ensure employees understand the Club's expected standards of behaviour and conduct;
 - 3.2.3. take appropriate action when they witness or are informed of inappropriate behaviour occurring.

- 3.3. The HR representative has the responsibility to ensure policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and up to date incorporating best practice and legal requirements, and these are communicated effectively.

4. What is whistleblowing?

- 4.1. We aim to maintain high standards of integrity in everything we do. However, all organisations can occasionally be affected by conduct that is dangerous, against the law, or that breaches ethical or professional codes. If you have such concerns, we encourage you to report them immediately – this is 'whistleblowing'. We will take your concerns seriously, they will be thoroughly investigated, and you can be confident there will be no reprisals.
- 4.2. The types of concerns, suspicions or activity you may want to raise with us by whistleblowing might include those which:
 - 4.2.1. are criminal (e.g. financial fraud or mismanagement or facilitating tax evasion)
 - 4.2.2. puts health and safety at risk
 - 4.2.3. breaches our Safeguarding policy
 - 4.2.4. harms the environment
 - 4.2.5. are miscarriages of justice
 - 4.2.6. breaches our Bribery policy
 - 4.2.7. fail to comply with legal, financial or regulatory obligations
 - 4.2.8. breaches our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy or involves discrimination related to any protected characteristics
 - 4.2.9. breaches our Dignity at Work policy or involves bullying or harassment
 - 4.2.10. breaches our Data Protection policy or unauthorised disclosure of confidential information
 - 4.2.11. fails to meet professional requirements
 - 4.2.12. attempts to conceal one or more of these activities.
- 4.3. This policy should not be used for complaints relating to an individual's personal circumstances at work. Other policies such as the Grievance Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy or Dignity at Work Policy will normally cover most personal concerns.
- 4.4. If you are not sure whether something you have become aware of is covered by this policy, speak with your manager or the HR representative, or email whistle@somersetcountycc.co.uk.

5. Raising a whistleblowing concern - employees

- 5.1. In most cases, we encourage employees to initially raise concerns with their manager, either in person or in writing if preferred.
- 5.2. If you prefer not to raise the concern with your manager for any reason, you feel they have not satisfactorily addressed the issues, or if your concerns are of a very serious nature, you should contact either:
 - 5.2.1. The HR representative
 - 5.2.2. Your manager's manager
 - 5.2.3. Any member of the Senior Executive Team
- 5.3. If an issue concerns a member of the Senior Executive Team, you should direct your concern to the CEO or Chair of the Board.
- 5.4. You can also submit a whistleblowing concern via our dedicated whistleblowing email address: whistle@somersetcountycc.co.uk.
- 5.5. You should state you are raising concerns under this policy and give a full explanation of what the issues are. Include all the key facts, dates, and the names of the people involved

where possible. Although you are not expected to substantially prove an allegation, you will need to demonstrate there are sufficient grounds of concern.

6. Raising a whistleblowing concern – third parties

- 6.1. For third parties, we advise you to email your concern to our dedicated email address: whistle@somersetcountycc.co.uk.
- 6.2. You should state you are raising concerns under this policy and give a full explanation of what the issues are. Include all the key facts, dates, and the names of the people involved where possible. Although you are not expected to substantially prove an allegation, you will need to demonstrate there are sufficient grounds of concern.

7. Addressing and investigating concerns

- 7.1. In order to protect individuals, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. Concerns or allegations that fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example safeguarding or discrimination issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- 7.2. You will be invited to a meeting within 10 working days of receipt of the concern to discuss your concerns. If you are an employee, you are entitled to be accompanied at this and any subsequent meetings by a colleague or trade union representative. If you are a third party, you may be accompanied by a person of your choice. You and your companion must both agree to keep your disclosures confidential before and after the meeting and during any investigation that may follow.
- 7.3. After the initial meeting, we will investigate your concerns if deemed appropriate. We may choose not to investigate further if the concern has been remedied during the initial meeting. We may ask you to attend further meetings. To investigate properly, we may involve specialists with particular knowledge or experience of the issues you have raised. Courses of action may include:
 - 7.3.1. Internal investigation
 - 7.3.2. Referral to the Police
 - 7.3.3. An independent inquiry
 - 7.3.4. Referral to an external advisor or authority
 - 7.3.5. Combinations of the above
- 7.4. We will keep you informed (in general terms) about how the investigation is progressing and how long it is likely to take. We may not be able to give you details about the investigation (or any action it leads to) as we need to protect confidentiality and comply with legal obligations. We understand this may be frustrating, and we will do our best to reassure you that things are in hand and to explain why we are acting in the way we are.
- 7.5. Employee concerns will be addressed fairly, but we cannot guarantee the outcome of our investigations will be the one you want. If you are not satisfied with how we have conducted the investigations, you can take the matter to another person of more senior authority for further consideration.
- 7.6. Most concerns are raised with good intentions, but occasionally someone makes a false allegation out of malice or because they believe they have something to gain. Any employee found doing this will face action under our disciplinary policy and may be dismissed for misconduct, or even gross misconduct. If a third party is found to have done this, we will seek legal advice.

8. Confidentiality and anonymity

- 8.1. We hope you will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy.

- 8.2. There is a significant difference between wanting to keep your concerns confidential and making a disclosure anonymously. We actively discourage anonymous whistleblowing.
- 8.3. Concerns raised anonymously are very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to investigate. We cannot properly establish whether allegations are credible without being able to ask you for more details or for clarification, and this makes it hard to reach an informed decision. This is why we urge you not to report matters anonymously.
- 8.4. If you do not feel comfortable in reporting your concern openly, tell us and we will do all we can to protect your identity. We may want to disclose your identity to people involved in the investigation, but we will always discuss this with you first.
- 8.5. You are protected from reprisals under this policy (see section 9) but if you are still worried, talk to us. We will explore how far we can go in keeping your concerns confidential.

9. How we protect you

- 9.1. Any individual who takes action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 will be protected from suffering any detriment in relation to the allegations that are made, including victimisation by the organisation or by colleagues.
- 9.2. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, we will support you fully even if we find through our investigations that you made a mistake or there has been no breach of policy, legal obligation or other activity set out above in paragraph 4.2 above. However, if you feel you have been treated badly as a result of raising a concern, you must tell us straightaway. For employees, first inform your manager or trade union representative and, if the matter remains unresolved, you must follow the formal process in our grievance policy. For third parties, please email whistle@somersetcountycc.co.uk, providing as much detail as possible.
- 9.3. All whistleblowers are given the same protection, so you must not threaten or otherwise badly treat others who have raised concerns under this policy. Any employee who behaves in this way may face disciplinary action which could include dismissal for gross misconduct. The whistleblower may also be able to bring legal action against you.
- 9.4. You can get further advice on whistleblowing, protecting confidentiality, and being protected from reprisals at www.protect-advice.org.uk. Protect is an independent charity that also offers an advice line (020 3117 2520).

10. Taking your concerns outside the Club

- 10.1. This policy outlines the process for raising, investigating, and resolving wrongdoing within the workplace. It should rarely be necessary for anyone outside of the Club to become involved when a whistleblowing allegation is made.
- 10.2. However, if after raising your concerns within us you are not satisfied with the response, you are entitled to contact a relevant external body to express the concerns. In doing this you should:
 - 10.2.1. have a reasonable belief that the allegation is based on correct facts
 - 10.2.2. make the disclosure to a relevant body (i.e. a regulatory body such as the Health and Safety Executive or the Financial Services Authority)
 - 10.2.3. have a reasonable belief it is in the public interest to make the disclosure.
- 10.3. If you do wish to take the matter outside the Club, you need to ensure that you do not disclose confidential information or the disclosure would be privileged. This can be checked with Protect (see below) who will also advise on ways to proceed and direct you towards the appropriate regulator for the type of issue you want to raise.

11. Outside support

- 11.1. Protect (Independent Charity) Tel: 0203 3117 2520 www.protect-advice.org.uk

11.2. The Government has produced a document "Blowing the Whistle to a Prescribed Person – List of Prescribed people and Bodies". It lists the appropriate organisations to handle whistleblowing complaints and should be referred to for up-to-date advice and guidance about who to contact:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/404330/bis-15-43-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person-list-of-prescribed.pdf

12. Contacting the media

12.1. The media is not a relevant external body. Alerting the media to a concern, particularly before or during an internal investigation, is almost never justified or appropriate in any situation. We strongly discourage you from doing so. We will treat any contact with the press as a serious issue, and for employees this will be considered a disciplinary issue justifying dismissal unless exceptional circumstances exist. We would normally expect you to have taken all reasonable steps to deal with the matter internally or with an external regulator, and to have taken full advice from a lawyer or from Protect before being justified in approaching the press.

13. Equal opportunities

13.1. The Whistleblowing Policy must always be applied fairly and in accordance with employment law and the Club's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

14. Policy review

1.1 This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and the Club may amend it at any time.

1.2 This policy reflects current statutory legislation at the time of writing. Any changes to statutory legislation will take precedence.

1.3 History of Policy Changes

Date	Page	Details of the change	Agreed by	Review date
October 2022	All	New policy		Oct 2023
May 2023	All	Updating language to reflect difference in reporting procedure for internal and external colleagues		