

Paddle UK Whistleblowing Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Paddle UK¹ encourages a free and open culture across the organisation as well as paddlesport more generally. However, all organisations face the risk of wrongdoing occurring or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. Paddle UK recognises that a culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.
- 1.2 This policy provides a mechanism for serious wrongdoing or unethical conduct within Paddle UK to be reported. The policy applies to all those who come into contact with Paddle UK who feel that they need to raise certain issues relating to the organisation with someone in confidence. This includes but is not limited to employees, members, athletes, coaches, UK Sports Institute staff, volunteers and consultants.
- 1.3 Subject to Clause 3.9, anyone approaching Paddle UK in good faith with information regarding suspected wrongdoing will not be subjected to any form of detriment or disadvantage as a result of having raised their concerns.
- 1.4 This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2 WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING

- 2.1 Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing, and generally concerns a breach of a legal, statutory or regulatory requirement or some unethical or immoral behaviour. For example:
 - Breach of Legal Obligations – Health and Safety Legislation
 - Breach of Paddle UK Policies and Codes of Conduct
 - General malpractice or unethical conduct
 - Gross misconduct
 - Financial irregularity
 - Discrimination
 - Bad practice in Safeguarding and/or Child Protection
 - Failure to water safety guidelines
 - The deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.
- 2.2 Certain cases of whistleblowing are covered by the law under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998:
 - a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed;
 - a person has failed, is failing, or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject;
 - a miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur;
 - the health and safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered;
 - the environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged;

¹ Paddle UK is a trading name of British Canoeing which is a Company registered at Companies House with the registered number 01525484.

- Information tending to show any of the above has been, is being, or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

3 PROCESS

- 3.1 A whistleblower is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the categories listed above in clause (2.1 or 2.2). If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities you should report it under this policy.
- 3.2 A whistleblower should contact the Director of Operations or the Chief Executive Officer. A dedicated email has also been established whistleblowing@paddleuk.org.uk to express any concerns.
- 3.3 The person who receives the disclosure will, in so far as is possible, treat the matter in confidence. In some exceptional circumstances confidence may need to be breached, for example if there is a potential threat to a child or an adult at risk.
- 3.4 Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosure. Where allegations are raised anonymously, it may be more difficult to investigate or establish whether any allegations are credible if further information cannot be obtained from the discloser. However, where an anonymous disclosure is made, we will consider the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern, and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources, before deciding whether a full investigation is possible.
- 3.5 The disclosure will initially be considered by the Director of Operations and/or the Chief Executive Officer. Issues relating to Safeguarding will be dealt with in accordance with Paddle UK Safeguarding Policies unless the disclosure relates to a failing of the Safeguarding Policies. Issues relating to Anti-Doping will be dealt with in accordance with Paddle UK Anti-Doping Policy unless the disclosure relates to a failing of the Anti- Doping Policy.
- 3.6 The Director of Operations and/or the Chief Executive Officer will acknowledge the disclosure and make preliminary enquiries. If appropriate they will investigate the matter and take any remedial action to rectify the situation. Where such action is not appropriate they will make arrangements for an independent investigation. Any investigation will not, at any stage, be carried out by any person against whom allegations are made. Where at all possible the investigation will be completed promptly, although more complex matters may require a longer and more thorough investigation.
- 3.7 If the disclosure relates to either the Director of Operations or the Chief Executive Officer, the person may raise the matter directly with the Chair of Paddle UK. The Chair of Paddle UK will acknowledge the disclosure and will make enquiries and if appropriate, investigate the matter and take any remedial action to rectify the situation. The Chair may also make arrangements for an independent investigation and will ensure any investigation is completed promptly, although more complex matters may require a longer and more thorough investigation.
- 3.8 Where an investigation is required, the whistleblower may be required to attend an investigatory hearing and/or a disciplinary hearing (as a witness). Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that the persons working relationships are not prejudiced by the fact of the disclosure.

- 3.9 We will aim to keep a whistleblower informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving specific details of the investigation, an outcome or any disciplinary action taken as a result. Any information about the investigation should be treated as confidential.
- 3.10 Whilst Paddle UK encourages whistleblowing, it will act appropriately if any disclosure is found both to be untrue and maliciously made (the person making the disclosure did not substantially believe them to be true). Such a disclosure may constitute a disciplinary offence for the purposes of our disciplinary regulations and procedures.
- 3.11 Each case will be treated without prejudice and on its own merits.

4 REQUEST FOR REVIEW

- 4.1 While we cannot always guarantee the outcome a whistleblower is seeking, we will always try to deal with the concern fairly and in an appropriate way. However, if in the view of the whistleblower the concern is not resolved satisfactorily by the Director of Operations and/or the Chief Executive Officer, the person raising the concern may raise the matter directly with the Chair of Paddle UK. The Chair of Paddle UK will acknowledge the request and will take any steps they deem appropriate including a review of the matter or where appropriate, a further investigation. The Chair of Paddle UK will keep the whistleblower updated as to the outcome and any remedial action taken.

5 EXTERNAL DISCLOSURES

- 5.1 The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing within Paddle UK. In most cases it should not be necessary to alert anyone externally.
- 5.2 However, the law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for the concerns to be reported to an external body such as a regulator or statutory body. It is advisable to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external.

6 PROTECTION AND SUPPORT FOR WHISTLEBLOWERS

- 6.1 It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.
- 6.2 Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform us immediately.
- 6.3 Anyone found to be threatening or retaliating against a whistleblower in any way, will be subject to disciplinary action.

7 REVIEW

- 7.1 Paddle UK will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and will review the policy at a minimum of every three years.

8 CONTACTS

General Whistleblowing Concerns	whistleblowing@paddleuk.org.uk
Director of Operations	Susan Hicks susan.hicks@paddleuk.org.uk
Chief Executive Officer	Ashley Metcalfe Ashley.metcalfe@paddleuk.org.uk
Chair of the Board	John Coyne john.coyne@paddleuk.org.uk
Protect (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: 020 3117 2520 Website: https://protect-advice.org.uk