

Policies & Procedures

Whistleblowing Policy v1.0

Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Lead	**Mrs. Tavleen Sharma - Registered Manager**
Version No.	1.0
Date of issue	February 2025
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Purpose

VCare Consultancy Services Ltd is committed to delivering safe, high-quality services in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 and the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Fundamental Standards. The organisation promotes an open, honest, and transparent culture in which workers feel confident to raise concerns without fear of reprisal.

This Whistleblowing Policy sets out how staff, contractors, agency workers, volunteers, and others engaged by VCare can report concerns about wrongdoing, risks, or malpractice within the company or in any setting where we provide services.

Policy Statement

VCare Consultancy Services Limited:

- Encourages all workers to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Commits to investigating concerns promptly, fairly, and confidentially wherever possible.
- Will not tolerate victimisation or retaliation against any person who raises a genuine concern.
- Will comply fully with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).
- Will ensure all disclosures relating to safety, quality of care, safeguarding, and compliance are escalated appropriately, including to external bodies such as the CQC where required.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees (permanent, temporary, fixed-term).
- Agency staff, bank staff, and contractors engaged by VCare.
- Volunteers, students, and trainees.
- Any individual who observes practice within a VCare setting or on assignment on behalf of VCare.

Concerns raised under this policy must be in the public interest and relate to wrongdoing such as:

- Abuse or neglect of service users.
- Breaches of CQC Fundamental Standards or regulatory non-compliance.
- Safeguarding concerns or failure to follow safeguarding procedures.
- Criminal activity, fraud, or financial misconduct.
- Health and safety risks.
- Deliberate concealment of information about any of the above.
- Poor practice that could cause harm or compromise the quality of care.

Issues relating to personal employment grievances (e.g., disputes, pay matters, interpersonal conflicts) should be raised through the Grievance Procedure, unless they involve public-interest concerns.

Principles

VCare Consultancy Services Ltd is committed to:

- **A culture of candour:** All staff have a duty to be open and honest, consistent with Regulation 20 (Duty of Candour).
- **Protection of whistleblowers:** Individuals who raise genuine concerns will not be dismissed, disciplined, bullied, or disadvantaged.
- **Fair investigation:** Concerns will be investigated objectively and proportionately.
- **Confidentiality:** The identity of the whistleblower will be protected wherever possible.
- **Learning and improvement:** Findings will be used to improve practices, procedures, and compliance.

How to Raise a Concern

Concerns should be raised as early as possible. Workers can raise concerns verbally or in writing.

Step 1: Raise the Concern Internally

You may raise concerns with:

Registered Manager
Mrs. Tavleen Sharma
VCare Consultancy Services Ltd
Email: tavleen.sharma@vcareconsultancy.com
Phone: 07495785566

Nominated Individual
Mr. Ashish Sharma
VCare Consultancy Services Ltd
Email: support@vcareconsultancy.com

Concerns should include:

- A clear description of the issue
- Dates, times, and location(s)
- Names of individuals involved (where known)
- Evidence or supporting information, if available

You do not need proof—reasonable belief is sufficient.

Step 2: Escalation if You Are Not Satisfied

If you feel unable to raise the matter internally, or if you have raised a concern and believe it was not addressed properly, you may escalate externally.

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External Reporting Options

Care Quality Commission (CQC) – Independent Whistleblowing Line

CQC encourages workers to share concerns about unsafe or poor-quality care.

- Phone: 03000 616161
- Online: CQC "Concerns and Complaints" portal
- Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

You may report anonymously.

6.2 Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team

Required where there is suspected abuse, neglect, or risk of harm.

6.3 Other Prescribed External Bodies under PIDA

Depending on the issue, these may include:

- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Local Authority Environmental Health
- Police (criminal activity)
- HMRC (fraud or financial misconduct)
- NHS England (if working in NHS-commissioned services)

VCare encourages staff to raise concerns internally first unless there is an immediate risk to safety.

Investigation Process

Upon receiving a concern, the Registered Manager or Nominated Individual will:

1. Acknowledge receipt within five working days.
2. Conduct an initial assessment and determine required actions.
3. Decide whether a formal investigation is required.
4. Appoint an impartial investigator if appropriate.
5. Provide progress updates where possible.
6. Conclude the investigation and communicate the outcome, subject to confidentiality constraints.

All investigations will be documented, evidence-based, and aligned with safeguarding, HR, and regulatory requirements.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

- VCare will take all reasonable steps to protect the identity of the whistleblower.
- Anonymous disclosures will be considered, although they may limit the ability to investigate fully.
- Information will be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

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Protection from Victimisation

Any person who retaliates against a whistleblower will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. All staff have a responsibility to foster a culture where concerns can be raised safely

If a whistleblower believes they are being victimised, they must report this immediately to the Registered Manager or Nominated Individual.

Malicious or Vexatious Allegations

While VCare encourages open reporting, allegations that are knowingly false or made maliciously will be treated as a disciplinary matter.

Training and Awareness

- All staff will be informed of this policy during induction.
- Annual refresher training will be delivered to ensure staff understand how to raise concerns.
- The policy will be accessible via the staff handbook, intranet, and workplace noticeboards.

Governance and Monitoring

- The Registered Manager will maintain a log of all whistleblowing concerns, investigations, and outcomes.
- Themes and learning will be reviewed quarterly as part of quality governance meetings.
- The Board/Nominated Individual will review this policy annually or sooner if legislation or CQC guidance changes.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months or earlier if required by regulatory or organisational changes.

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