



Mears Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Aims, Purpose and Scope

This Policy is designed to ensure that you can raise your concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the Group without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination, disadvantage or dismissal.

The Policy aims to:

- encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns at the earliest opportunity and to question and act upon concerns regarding wrong doing
- provide avenues for you to raise those concerns
- ensure that you receive a response to your concerns
- reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have made any disclosure in good faith.

Who can raise a concern under this Policy?

The Policy applies to all:

- employees of Mears Group PLC
- employees of contractors working for the Group, for example, sub-contractors and agency staff
- employees of supplier, and
- Member of the public who observe wrong doing by a Mears Group employee or representative of the Group

What should be reported?

Examples:

- Any form of criminal activity
- Intentional misrepresentations directly or indirectly affecting financial statements
- Fraud, bribery and corruption
- Danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- A serious breach of fundamental internal control (including SODA)
- The deliberate concealment of knowledge of malpractice or misconduct

When you should not use this policy?

Examples:

- Dissatisfaction with working conditions
- Concerns about work allocation
- Evidence of unfairness in the work place
- Evidence of abuse at work, including bullying and harassment
- Evidence of discrimination
- General dissatisfaction with your line manager, management or colleagues

These and other associated employment related issues, should to be taken up with line management in the first instance and if this is not practical/appropriate then Human Resources via the Group's Grievance Policy.

Mears Group also recognises that there may be circumstances for reporting matters to outside bodies, such as regulators or the police, either in addition to or as an alternative to raising disclosures under this policy.

Making a disclosure

If the individual is unable to raise the matter with their manager or with their day to day contact within Mears, for whatever reason, then they should bring the disclosure to the attention of the Group by contacting either:-

- a) **Paul Phillips – Group Internal Audit Manager. 07545938230 or paul.phillips@mearsgroup.co.uk**
- b) **Bob Holt – Chairman, 07778 798816 or bob.holt@mearsgroup.co.uk**

Or in writing to either person at: Mears Group PLC, 1390 Montpellier Court, Gloucester Business Park, Brockworth, Gloucester, GL3 4AH

Protection and False Declaration

This policy is designed to encourage employees to raise issues of concern, in confidence, in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects employees from being dismissed or otherwise disadvantaged by their employer for reporting malpractices or misconduct that have occurred in the workplace. However, under the revised act of June 2013, a disclosure is only protected if it is 'in the public interest'.

a) Safety

The Mears Group PLC Board of Directors are committed to this policy. If an individual raises a genuine concern under this policy, he/ she will not be at risk of losing their job/contract or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided he/she is acting in good faith, it does not matter if the concern has been raised in error. This assurance is not extended to any individual who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue, and where such circumstances are identified, the individual may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure (if they are an employee) or may have their contract terminated in other circumstances.

b) Confidentiality

Mears will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, the Group does recognise that individuals may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If the individual asks for their identity to be protected by keeping their confidence, Mears will not disclose it without their consent. Any disclosure made under this policy will be treated with the utmost confidence and if requested individual identity will be protected so far as is reasonably practicable. If the situation arises where Mears is not able to resolve the concern without revealing the individual's identity, it will discuss with the individual how best to proceed.

c) Anonymity

A disclosure may be made anonymously, however workers are encouraged to put their name to any disclosure made as concerns expressed anonymously cannot be dealt with as effectively as open disclosures. It should be noted that where an individual does not identify themselves to the Mears, it will be much more difficult to investigate the matter or to give feedback. However, Mears cannot

guarantee anonymity to anyone who chooses to disclose information to colleagues or other outside parties. Anonymous disclosures will be considered and an investigation made at the discretion of Mears.

d) False Declaration

While it is not necessary for the individual to prove the breach or failure has occurred or is occurring, the individual will not be protected from the consequences of making such a disclosure if by doing so he/she commits a criminal offence or if the disclosure is motivated by reason that is not in good faith.

If any disclosure is made in bad faith or concerns information which the individual or Mears does not substantially believe to be true, or if the disclosure is made for personal gain, or they are party to the act, then such a disclosure may constitute a disciplinary offence under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and may constitute gross misconduct (in the case of employees) or a material breach of contract (in the case of agency workers, sub-contractors, suppliers, customers, third parties etc.).

e) Independent Advice

Public Concern at Work is the leading authority on public interest whistleblowing. Individuals can contact them via their website www.pcaw.co.uk or on 020 7404 6609, if they feel unsure about using this policy or if they would like further independent advice about how to raise a concern about a serious malpractice in the workplace.