

BSAC Whistleblowing Policy

Why do we need a whistleblowing policy?

A whistleblowing policy will:

- Encourage individuals who have serious concerns about malpractice involving BSAC to raise these.
- Provide a method by which individuals can raise concerns.
- Ensure that individuals receive a response to their concerns.
- Reassure individuals that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing.

Who is covered by the BSAC Whistleblowing Policy?

All those involved in any activity carried out by BSAC are covered by the policy.

Key principles of the BSAC Whistleblowing Policy

The key principles of the BSAC Whistleblowing policy are:

- The policy is complimentary to other BSAC policies. These include, but are not limited to, Safeguarding, Safety and Financial policies.
- Individuals, in the first instance, report their concerns to the person responsible for an area or activity, following applicable policy, if appropriate.
- The BSAC Whistleblowing Policy may be followed when it is inappropriate to report concerns to the person responsible for an area or activity, or apparently inadequate action has been taken.
- The BSAC CEO has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. A separate procedure will take place in the event of allegations made against the CEO.

Potential bars to whistleblowing

Individuals may feel unable to disclose their concerns because:

- They may fear personal consequences and difficulties would arise.
- They may fear they could be subject to harassment or victimisation.

- They may know and respect the person who appears to be involved and cannot believe what they have seen or heard, causing them to minimise or excuse their concerns.

However:

- BSAC is committed to the highest possible standards of fairness, openness, honesty and accountability. All those who have serious concerns should be able to come forward and follow the whistleblowing policy to do this.
- BSAC expects all individuals to consider fairness, openness, honesty and accountability and put these above any relationship with the individual(s) involved, when considering whistleblowing.
- BSAC is committed to enabling individuals to raise matters of serious concern without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

How to report concerns

Individuals in a Branch should, in the first instance, report their concerns to the person responsible for the area in which concerns occurred and follow procedures in line with applicable BSAC policy, where this exists. Examples are:

- Concerns regarding diving matters should be raised by an individual to the Dive Manager or Diving Officer.
- Concerns regarding matters other than diving should be raised by an individual to the Chairperson or other committee member.
- Concerns regarding safeguarding in a Branch should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer, following policy contained in the BSAC Safeguarding documents.

How to report serious concerns (whistleblowing)

Having explored the normal route of reporting their concerns detailed above, or in situation which makes this route inappropriate, then whistleblowing may be an option.

In this case, the individual should contact the BSAC Safety and Development Manager at BSAC HQ.

Email: concern@bsac.com

Tel: 0151 350 6210

The person reporting should seek to provide as much detail as possible.

Should the BSAC Safety and Development Manager be unavailable, the person reporting should state to BSAC HQ staff that they want to talk confidentially to an appropriate staff member.

The individual reporting their concerns may wish to remain anonymous and this subject is dealt with later in this document.

Dealing with allegations made by whistleblowers

- BSAC is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of all individuals involved with the organisation.
- BSAC recognises that disclosing concerns may be uncomfortable but, when facing serious concerns, individuals should recognise their moral duty and hold no fear. They are acting in the best interests of BSAC and individuals within it.
- BSAC will not tolerate any harassment, victimisation or disadvantage (including informal pressures) to individuals who follow its whistleblowing policy.
- Any investigation into alleged serious concerns will neither influence nor be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that may be in progress, or have already taken place.
- Confidentiality will be maintained regarding whistleblowers and their identity.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages whistleblowers to put their name to allegations they make following whistleblowing policy. It is not possible to clarify matters or seek additional data from a person making an anonymous allegation. As a result, although anonymous concerns will nevertheless be fully considered, it may not be possible to deal with the matter in the most effective manner.

False allegations

It is not a false allegation if an individual raises a serious concern in good faith which is later proved to be untrue. In such circumstances no action will be taken against the whistleblower.

If, however, it is established that an allegation is malicious, vexatious, frivolous, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against the whistleblower.

Advice from external agencies

Protect, formerly Public Concern at Work, has a free and confidential advice line with regards to whistleblowing protection. Individuals may submit concerns through their online form.

The contact details for Protect are:

Website: protect-advice.org.uk

Tel: 020 3117 2520