



Date: 20th April 2026

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Purpose

The Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy aims to provide a safe and effective working environment, which enables individuals to raise genuine concerns about malpractice or unlawful conduct in the workplace or member body. This policy is intended to empower employees and members to disclose serious wrongdoing or unlawful conduct without fear of victimisation.

This policy is intended to:

- promote a culture of openness to protect the ethical reputation of the Association.
- provide safeguards to enable individuals to raise genuine concerns about malpractice in confidence and without fear of repercussions.
- ensure that all individuals working with or members of the Association have a clear and effective means of raising concerns and may be accompanied by his/her Trade Union representative or (work) colleague of his/her choice.
- ensure that individuals who raise concerns receive feedback on any action taken.

Principles

The Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy will ensure that any genuine concerns raised about misconduct or malpractice are fully investigated and appropriate steps taken to deal with any resultant issues. Feedback will be provided to the individual who has raised the concern to the extent that is proper without infringing other duties of confidence.

Employees and members are expected to use the Policy rather than air outside the Association any concerns which they may have. Any employee or member who chooses to make a disclosure outside the Association for Family and Systemic Psychotherapy (including e.g., to the press) without applying this policy would not be protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act unless the disclosure meets the specific preconditions set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

It should be emphasised that the Policy, in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act, is concerned with alleged malpractice, impropriety or wrongdoing in the workplace and member body. It is not designed to provide a route through which individuals can publicly question financial or business decisions taken by the Association, and it offers no protection to such individuals. Neither may the Policy be used to obtain a rehearing of matters which have already been addressed under other policies/procedures such as Disciplinary, Capability or Grievance procedures.



Scope

The Whistleblowing Policy specifically applies to all staff who are employed by the Association along with the member body. However, the policy should also be followed by those employed on a contract for service or through an agency who become aware of malpractice or unlawful conduct in the workplace.

This policy does not apply to concerns of a personal or professional nature that relate to the individual treatment of an employee, or the application of an employment policy to him or her as an individual. These should be handled through the Grievance Procedure.

Context and Statutory Protection

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers for publicly disclosing serious concerns falling into certain specified categories. This policy is designed to be used to raise serious concerns which are in the public interest. Examples of serious misconduct, impropriety or malpractice which may prompt such a disclosure are:

- Criminal activity.
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation.
- Miscarriage of justice.
- Endangering of health or safety.
- Damage to the environment.
- Financial or non-financial maladministration, malpractice or fraud.
- Professional malpractice.
- Failure of an individual/s to disclose a serious conflict of interest.
- Attempts to suppress or conceal information relating to any of the above.

Protection is provided under the Policy provided that the disclosure is made in good faith and in the reasonable belief of the person making the disclosure that the information made available tends to show malpractice.