



'Speak Out' Policy

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1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 HS2 Limited ('**HS2 Ltd**') is committed to a working environment based on our four values: respect, leadership, integrity and safety. The purpose of this Policy is to set out what whistleblowing is and how concerns should be raised. At HS2 Ltd, whistleblowing falls under the 'Speak Out' Policy.
- 1.1.2 This Policy sets out how staff, contractors and others (including members of the public) can raise concerns, without fear of victimisation, when they believe something is wrong.
- 1.1.3 HS2 Ltd is committed to treating all concerns fairly and consistently and will not tolerate any detriment or victimisation to staff as a result of making a disclosure.

2 Scope

- 2.1.1 The scope of this Policy applies to all staff working within HS2 Ltd roles, including employees, secondees, board members, development partner staff, agency staff, interim staff and any other third party working on HS2 Ltd's premises or on behalf of HS2 Ltd.

3 Aims

- 3.1.1 Everyone who works on the HS2 Project is responsible for reporting any concerns when they believe that something is wrong. HS2 Ltd seeks to maintain high standards of business behaviour and to act ethically and with integrity in everything we do.
- 3.1.2 The aims of this Policy are:
- To encourage staff and others to report concerns of suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and directed to the appropriate investigating team.
 - To remind staff that not every situation can be controlled or influenced by every individual, and some actions and decisions may be beyond their control or responsibility. By speaking out and reporting concerns, staff contribute to fostering a culture of integrity and accountability at HS2.
 - To provide staff and others with guidance on how to raise their concerns.
 - To reassure staff and others that they can raise concerns without fear of victimisation.

4 What is malpractice?

4.1.1 Malpractice at HS2 Ltd is defined as things that are wrong, examples of malpractice include but are not limited to:

- Criminal offences
- Fraud, theft or other dishonesty, for example wrongfully claiming expenses
- Bribery or corruption
- Misuse of confidential information
- Undisclosed conflicts of interest
- Making unauthorised political donations
- Breaching laws (e.g. procurement law, competition law or data protection law)
- Improper accounting or auditing practices
- Damage to the environment
- Serious breaches of health and safety requirements
- Modern slavery
- Concealment of malpractice

4.1.2 If you are unsure whether your concern constitutes "malpractice", you should seek advice from HS2 Ltd's Counter Fraud & Investigations ('**CFI**') team or simply raise the concern.

4.1.3 There are some forms of malpractice, which must always be disclosed to comply with our legal obligations, these are:

Reporting inappropriate accounting, internal or accounting controls or auditing practices, improper influence over external auditors or any questionable accounting or auditing matters.

5 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

5.1.1 Under UK law, a whistleblower is someone who makes a qualifying disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 ('**PIDA**'). PIDA only applies only to those directly employed by HS2, agency staff and consultants. However, in order to provide you with further information about the protection available to whistleblowers under PIDA, we set out below a summary of the key elements.

- 5.1.2 PIDA gives protection to a worker (if that worker is discriminated against or disadvantaged by their employer because they are a whistleblower) in certain circumstances. This protection will be given if a worker disclosed information about a criminal offence, a failure to comply with any legal obligation, a miscarriage of justice, dangers to health or safety, damage to the environment or deliberate concealment of any of these in circumstances where such worker reasonably believes the disclosure is made in the public interest.
- 5.1.3 To obtain this protection, the worker must have a reasonable belief that the information is substantially true and has disclosed the information to a legal adviser, their employer (in certain circumstances), a Minister of the Crown (in certain circumstances), to a 'prescribed person' (as defined in the PIDA) or to any person/body (provided certain conditions are satisfied, including that such disclosure cannot be for personal gain).

6 How to raise a concern

If you believe that something is not right, it is vital that you raise your concerns through one of the following channels.

6.1 Speak Out Website & Telephone Line

- 6.1.1 You can report a concern through our secure two-way web reporting link or free telephone line as follows:
- **Website:** ['Speak Out' Website Link](#)
 - **Telephone:** 0808 196 5847
- 6.1.2 The telephone line is free to callers, operated 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, and offers the option of leaving a voicemail if you do not wish to speak directly to a person.
- 6.1.3 You may report any concerns on a named, confidential or anonymous basis.
- 6.1.4 You will be given a case number and asked to call back or log back in if you want to leave further information or track the progress of the concern.
- 6.1.5 Any information you provide will be escalated to the HS2 Ltd CFI team.
- 6.1.6 Upon receipt of a report where a potential conflict of interest arises the reporting channels in the table below are followed in order to maintain the integrity of the investigation.

Reports concerning	Reporting Channel
Executive Committee, Board Members	Chair of the ARAC.
ARAC Members (including Non-Executive Directors)	General Counsel
CFI Team	Chair of the ARAC.

6.1.7 Concerns investigated by the CFI team will be treated as confidential; however, information may be shared with law enforcement, Employee & Industrial Relations or other relevant authorities where necessary. Concerns of malpractice relating to health and safety and employee relations will not be investigated by the CFI team and will be referred to the relevant team for further investigation, along with all information provided in relation to the allegation(s). You will be notified of this referral if made.

6.1.8 Unless provided by yourself, no data will be captured that indicates your identity. For example, your Internet Protocol (IP) address of the computer/device used is not recorded.

6.2 Counter Fraud & Investigations Team

6.2.1 You can also report a concern by email directly to:

- **CFI team, at SpeakOut@hs2.org.uk**

6.2.2 You will be contacted within three working days upon raising a concern through the aforementioned channels. The CFI team will endeavour to keep you informed about the investigation and what action is being taken.

6.2.3 Whoever you contact, please consider what information will help the matter to be investigated swiftly. This could include:

- What is your concern?
- Who is involved?
- What is happening, or what has happened?
- How often has it happened?
- When did it happen or is it still going on?
- What evidence (if any) do you have?

6.3 Line manager

- 6.3.1 You can also report a concern directly to your line manager.
- 6.3.2 Line managers are responsible for understanding the procedures for raising concerns, including the protections offered under PIDA.
- 6.3.3 Line managers should be equipped to respond appropriately, ensure concerns are escalated through the correct channels, and foster a culture where employees feel safe and supported in speaking up.

7 Grievances

- 7.1.1 Concerns about your own employment relationship with your manager, your colleagues or HS2 Ltd in general, should not be addressed through this 'Speak Out' Policy.
- 7.1.2 **A personal grievance** about your own employment rights being breached or a matter at work that affects only you personally (for example, the hours you are being asked to work), **is not a whistleblowing matter and should be raised in accordance with the** HS2 Ltd Grievance Policy, (details of that Policy can be found elsewhere on the intranet), or the equivalent policy of your employer.
- 7.1.3 If you have a concern in relation to the nefarious or improper conduct of the way in which the grievance process has been handled, you can raise the concern through our 'Speak Out' channels. If you believe the employment rights of others are being breached or you are reporting a matter at work that affects others, you should raise this through our 'Speak Out' channels.

8 Health & Safety concerns

- 8.1.1 Concerns about the health and safety of staff, contractors and members of the public on HS2 Ltd premises should be raised in accordance with the HS2 Ltd Health & Safety process.

9 Non-Standard Reporting Channels

- 9.1.1 Concerns directed to the CFI team outside of the reporting channels specified in this policy will be handled with the same level of care and diligence as those received through the aforementioned mechanisms. However, such disclosures may not be eligible for protection under PIDA.

- 9.1.2 Where a report meets the criteria set out under PIDA, the individual making the disclosure may be entitled to legal protections. These protections apply only when the disclosure is made to a recognised person or body, as defined by the legislation.
- 9.1.3 Disclosures made to individuals not covered under PIDA—such as colleagues without authority or unrelated third parties—may not be protected. The applicability of PIDA protections is dependent on the specific circumstances surrounding the disclosure, including the identity of the recipient and the nature of the concern.

10 Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023

- 10.1.1 HS2 Ltd recognises its obligations under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA), including the new “failure to prevent fraud” offence. Reports made through this ‘Speak Out’ policy may help identify fraud or misconduct involving employees, suppliers, or other associated persons. Speaking out plays a crucial role in enabling HS2 Ltd to take timely action and demonstrate that reasonable fraud prevention procedures are in place.

11 Applicability, implementation and resources

- 11.1.1 This Policy applies to all aspects of the HS2 programme. Implementation within HS2 Ltd is managed through HS2 Ltd’s Management System by the General Counsel; implementation by industry partners is achieved through contracts and agreements developed by HS2 Ltd in accordance with the Management System. HS2 Ltd will make available appropriate resources to support this Policy and take necessary steps so that it remains effective and relevant through regular reviews and updates.
- 11.1.2 For further information and independent advice on raising whistleblowing concerns, employees are encouraged to consult external resources. These include:
- **Protect** (formerly Public Concern at Work), a whistleblowing charity offering confidential guidance;
 - **ACAS** (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service), which provides impartial advice on workplace rights and responsibilities;
 - **Official UK government** website on whistleblowing
<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

- 11.1.3 These organisations can offer support and clarity on your rights and the appropriate steps to take when raising a concern.

12 Executive Owner

- 12.1.1 The CFO is the Executive Owner of this Policy and is responsible for maintaining the accuracy and relevance of its contents and for periodic review and update to reflect changing circumstances.