



Skills Funding  
Agency

# Allegations of fraud or financial irregularity policy

December 2015

## **1. The purpose of this policy**

The [Procedure for dealing with complaints about providers of education and training](#) document sets out how the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) will deal with complaints promptly, fairly and proportionately. Our Intervention and Investigation Team manage allegations of fraud or financial irregularity.

We recognise that making allegations of fraud or financial irregularity can be difficult, so this policy outlines:

- the type of concern that the SFA will consider
- how the SFA will deal with reported concerns
- the actions the SFA will take and the related timescales

## **2. Types of allegations the Intervention and Investigation Team will consider**

The SFA role is to clarify if allegations or information from any source indicate financial irregularity or that a college or other training organisation may have broken the funding rules. The SFA will consider the information to determine the appropriate action.

The following list identifies some of the allegations that the Intervention and Investigation Team may consider (the list is not exhaustive).

- Allegations of financial irregularity.
- Allegations that a college or other training organisation has claimed funding from us through deception.
- Allegations of fraud.
- Allegations that a college or other training organisation has broken the funding rules.
- Non-delivery of training that has been funded by the SFA.

### **3. Types of allegations the SFA will not consider**

The SFA will not consider the following types of allegations (the list is not exhaustive).

- Concerns relating to employment and/or contracts of employment of individual staff.
- Contractual disputes between employees and employers.
- Complaints about managers, including bullying and harassment.

### **4. How to report concerns regarding fraud or financial irregularity**

Before raising a concern with the SFA you must have a reasonable belief that the disclosure is both true and in the public interest. To raise a concern, contact us by telephone, email or post:

**Telephone:** 0345 377 5000

**Email:** [intervention@sfa.bis.gov.uk](mailto:intervention@sfa.bis.gov.uk)

**Post:** Skills Funding Agency  
Intervention and Investigation Team  
Cheylesmore House  
Quinton Road  
Coventry  
CV1 2WT

The SFA will assess your concerns and decide on the appropriate action. Where necessary, the team will refer your concerns to other organisations such as the police or other government departments.

If you contact us by telephone we will explain our process and record information that you are willing to provide. We will also ask you to provide a summary of your concerns in a letter or email.

## **5. Confidentiality and concerns raised anonymously**

We prefer that you do not raise concerns anonymously. It is difficult to investigate matters where we are unable to contact the whistleblower directly. Unless the SFA considers that there is information or evidence available from other sources, the SFA may not act on anonymous allegations.

If you raise concerns, the SFA will not disclose your identity without your consent, unless this is required for legal reasons. In some circumstances, it may not be possible to act upon your concerns without disclosing your identity. The SFA will always seek your consent before they disclose information to a third party if you have previously requested that your identity is not disclosed.

If you do not provide this consent, they may not be able to investigate your concerns properly, or at all.

## **6. Action on receiving a complaint**

Where you have provided contact details, the SFA will acknowledge receipt of your concern within five working days. The SFA may also seek further information from you at this stage.

When the SFA has sufficient information, the team will assess your concern to determine any further actions.

If your concerns are not something the SFA can deal with, we may refer your concerns to another body and we will contact you to notify you of this decision. Alternatively, we may provide you with the contact details of the appropriate body for you to contact.

The investigation process can take up to 12 weeks and the SFA will inform you if the process is likely to take longer.

Wherever possible they will inform you of the outcome of any investigation, the action taken or the recommendations made to third parties.

## **7. Whistleblowers**

The SFA is an executive agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills is responsible for matters about fraud or other wrongdoing in relation to companies registered under the Companies Act 2013. This means that such a disclosure is protected for the purposes of the Employment Rights Act 1996. Disclosures relating to other matters will not be protected for the purposes of the Act.

We may need to share allegations with other government departments and organisations that may have an interest or be able to assist us in our consideration of the matters raised. Unless there is a statutory obligation to do so, the SFA will not share your personal details without first seeking your consent.



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