



Whistleblowing Policy

1.1 Policy Statement

1.1 Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE takes whistleblowing seriously any valid and non-malicious disclosure of a failing within the firm, either by the firm itself through operational failings or by any staff member or an associated individual.

1.2 Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE support all staff and encourage an open and transparent workplace where employees feel safe to report any concerns that they may have. When an individual reports a concern, and advises that the disclosure has been made under Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE Whistle Blower Policy, we will take every measure to ensure that the staff members' identity is protected and that they are treated in a fair and confidential manner.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE intent and approach with regards to complying with UK Legislation and the FCA Handbook (SYSC 18) requirements regarding Whistleblowing and our own internal Whistleblowing Policy and procedures.

2.2 We maintain a transparent and open workplace where all staff are encouraged to report any suspicions or concerns to a Manager or designated person without fear of recrimination or further consequences. All such reports are held in the strictest confidence and reporting staff will be treated with due consideration and respect.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies in full to Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE and its staff (meaning permanent, fixed term, and temporary staff, any third-party representatives or sub-contractors, agency workers, volunteers, interns and agents engaged with Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE in the UK or overseas). Any member of staff who does not follow this policy and any associated procedures will be subject to disciplinary procedures and possible termination from the company.

4. What is Whistleblowing?

4.1 For the purposes of this policy, 'whistleblowing' refers to any individual who has become aware of a reportable concern taking place in or in association with Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE and who shares this information with another person, authority or regulator, for the purposes of reporting it.

4.2 The person doing the reporting is known by the term 'Whistle blower'. This person can be an employee, contractor, agent, client, supplier or any other 3rd party associated with Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE. Despite the stigma surrounding the term 'whistleblowing', Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE views this act in a positive light and will work to protect the identity and reputation of any person who comes forward to report actual or suspected illegal activities.



5 Who Can Raise a Concern?

5.1 Any member of staff who has reasonable belief of a qualifying disclosure can raise and/or report a concern. A qualifying disclosure is information about malpractice, which include, but is not limited to, criminal offences, failure to comply with legal and/or regulatory obligations, threats to or breaches of health and safety of an individual, damage to the environment and/or a deliberate attempt to cover up any of the above.

5.2 Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, all workers, including temporary agency staff and persons on training courses (excluding volunteers) can raise a concern without malice and in good faith. Disclosures must not be made for purposes of personal gain and the policy does not apply to personal grievances regarding: -

· An employee's terms and conditions of employment. Any aspect of the working relationship
Complaints of bullying or harassment
Disciplinary matters.

6 The Whistle blowers' champion

6.1 A UK relevant authorised person is required under SYSC 4.7.5R (1) to allocate the FCA-prescribed senior management responsibility for acting as the firm's Whistle blowers' champion.

6.2 This section sets out the role of the Whistle blowers' champion.

Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE will appoint a non-executive director as its Whistle blowers' champion unless no non-executive director exists.

6.3 The Whistle blowers' champion:

- should have a level of authority and independence within the firm and access to resources (including access to independent legal advice and training) and information sufficient to enable him to carry out that responsibility;
- need not have a day-to-day operational role handling disclosures from Whistle blowers; and
- may be based anywhere provided he can perform his function effectively.

7. Objectives

Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE ensures: -

- to establish, implement and maintain appropriate and effective arrangements for the disclosure of reportable concerns by Whistle blowers.
- all staff are aware that any concerns or suspicions of wrong doing are to be reported to a manager immediately and that any such report will not purport any negative consequences or detrimental treatment within the workplace by any other staff member
- staff are made aware of alternate reporting lines (i.e. Compliance Manager), should they wish not to disclose their concern to a direct line manager
- staff are made aware that any false or malicious reports will be penalised by the firm and disciplinary action will be taken
- all staff are made aware of external advice providers with who they can communicate
- all staff are protected from victimisation, harassment or disciplinary action, because of any disclosure.

7.1 The Whistle blower should make it clear that they are making their disclosure within the terms of this whistleblowing policy, which ensures that the recipient of the disclosed information realises this and takes the necessary action to investigate the disclosure and to protect the Whistle blower's identity.

7.2 In accordance with the FCA's updated regulatory requirements on whistleblowing, Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE will ensure that the below regulatory objectives are met and put into place.



7.3 Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE confirms that we will: -

- appoint a Senior Manager as our Whistle blower's champion
- put in place internal whistleblowing arrangements able to handle all types of disclosure from all types of person
- put text in settlement agreements explaining that our workers have a legal right to blow the whistle
- tell our UK-based employees about the FCA and PRA whistleblowing services
- present a report on whistleblowing to the board at least annually
- inform the FCA if we lose an employment tribunal with a Whistle blower
- require our appointed representatives and tied agents to tell their UK-based employees about the FCA whistleblowing service

8. Whistle blower Protection & Rights

8.1 Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE takes any suggestion or report of illegal activity associated with the company very seriously and will always carry out a full investigation into any allegations. This policy has been written in consideration of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects any employee who makes a disclosure about certain matters of concern, when those disclosures are made in accordance with the Act's provisions and in good faith.

8.2 We fully support that clause in this Act which makes it unlawful to dismiss anyone or allow them to be victimised on the basis that they have made an appropriate lawful disclosure in accordance with the Act. We will also ensure that any employee who makes a disclosure under this Act and policy is supported and protected against harassment and/or victimisation.

8.3 Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE does not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a Whistle blower (including informal pressures, suggestions or remarks) and will take appropriate action to protect any employee who raises a concern in good faith. Any employee found to be the cause of harassment or victimisation will be considered to have committed a serious disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the disciplinary rules and procedures.

8.4 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the disclosing employee if they so wish. We also support the act of making disclosures anonymously if an employee feels this is their only options, however we would encourage any employee to put their name to any allegation where possible so that a follow up and proper investigation can be conducted.

9. Procedure

9.1 Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE ensures that all staff are aware of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures and are provided with access to the Whistleblowing Incident form and reporting lines. Any employee wishing to raise a concern, is asked to follow the below process;

9.2 Raising a Concern

- Obtain a copy of the Whistleblowing Complaint Form from the Commercial Office
- Complete the Whistleblowing Complaint Form, ensuring all details are provided
- Submit the completed form to the Compliance Director/Compliance Manager.

9.3 Non-Whistleblowing Complaints

Where the assigned investigator deems the complaint to be dealt with under alternate company procedures (e.g. general complaint procedure, grievance procedure), they will advise the person making the disclosure as to the appropriate steps to follow.

9.4 Whistleblowing Complaints

Where the investigator considers the complaint to be subject to the Whistleblowing Procedures, the investigator decides whether the matter raised should be:

- Investigated internally
- Referred to an external auditor
- Referred for independent enquiry
- Reported to the authorities and/or regulating body



9.5 Complaint Assessment

All Whistleblowing Complaint Forms are assigned to a designated person who is responsible for:

- Investigating the concern raised
- Decide if the complaint should be dealt with under the Whistleblowing Procedure
- Gathering additional and/or supporting information
- Reviewing the complaint
- Completing the Whistleblowing Complaint Form

9.6 Where the investigator decides not to proceed with an investigation or that no outcome actions are required after reviewing the complaint details; this decision is explained fully to the individual who raised the concern.

9.7 The individual is then advised that if they disagree with the decision not to proceed, they may report the incident again to Compliance Director/Compliance Manager or an independent body.

9.8 Investigation Outcome

Where the complaint was founded, the investigator will complete the Whistleblowing Complaint Form with the review outcome and advise of the next steps to be taken. Where the incident is dealt with internally, resulting actions are recorded on the form and any formal disciplinary actions (if applicable) are noted.

9.9 Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that this policy is disseminated to and understood by all staff and that the supplementing procedures and reporting lines are also made clear and are available for reference.

9.10 All staff are expected to comply with any related regulatory requirements and our own internal policy and procedures, failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

10. Consumer Duty

At Optimum Commercial Solutions Ltd T/A Optimum ELITE, we are committed to upholding the standards of the Consumer Duty as mandated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). As an FCA regulated firm, we recognise the critical role that whistleblowing plays in safeguarding the interests of our customers and maintaining the integrity of our operations. We encourage all employees, contractors, and stakeholders to report any concerns or observations related to potential breaches of Consumer Duty promptly.

