

Dealing with Malpractice

Scope of the policy

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners and mentors, and staff who are using or delivering the training services listed and who are involved in suspected or actual malpractice.

- National Qualifications
- Buttercups devised courses accredited by GPhC
- Buttercups devised courses

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the steps you, your learners or other personnel follow when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice and our responsibilities in dealing with such cases. It is also in place to review those processes which led to the suspected or actual case of malpractice and to support you in any investigations. We will act upon any reports of suspected or actual cases of malpractice we receive about your activities, your personnel or your learners which may affect the integrity of the training programme(s) and quality assurance systems. We also have a professional responsibility to report non adherence to the GPhC code of conduct.

Location of the policy

You can download copies of this policy from our website: www.buttercups.co.uk or request copies from our Professional Services Team on 0115 937 4936 or by emailing training@buttercups.co.uk.

We have also signposted the policy in our *Student Handbook* which is available to use for each of our courses.

Communication of the policy

It is important that both personnel involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of our programmes and your learners studying our programmes are fully aware of the contents of the policy. Please ensure that you have made your learners aware of the policy.

Review of the policy

We will review the policy annually and revise it as and when required in response to customer and stakeholder feedback, changes in our practices, actions required by the GPhC or external agencies or changes in legislation. Our review will ensure that our procedures continue to be consistent with the regulatory criteria and are applied properly and fairly in arriving at judgements.

Definitions

Malpractice is essentially any activity or practice which deliberately contravenes regulations and compromises the integrity of the assessment process and/or the validity of certificates. For the purpose of this policy this term also covers professional misconduct.

The categories listed below are examples of centre and candidate malpractice. Please note that these examples are not exhaustive and are guidance on our definition of malpractice:

- Forgery of evidence
- Plagiarism of any nature by learners
- Submission of false information to gain a proxy or a qualification
- Discriminatory, bullying or harassing behaviour
- Unprofessional conduct
- Behaviour likely to endanger the health or safety of the public
- Breach of confidentiality of patients, learners or organisation
- Failure to meet the awarding body or regulator's requirements
- Falsifying assessment records

Reporting procedure

Anybody identifying cases of malpractice should report them to our Professional Services Team and ask to be contacted by the Managing Director regarding a claim of malpractice. We have to investigate all cases of malpractice in liaison with the parties concerned. If an investigation finds evidence of maladministration, we will have to take the necessary steps to ensure that the learners' interests are protected as far as is reasonably possible. This may include making arrangements for re-assessment. If the investigation reveals that certification is inappropriate we will have to take the necessary steps to revoke the certification in order to protect the health and safety of the public.

Following contact by telephone, you should submit your own report accompanied by supporting evidence. Reports must include:

- The learner's name
- Buttercups personnel's details (name, job role) if they are involved in the case
- The title of the Buttercups programme affected or nature of the service affected
- The date(s) suspected or actual malpractice occurred
- The full nature of the suspected or actual malpractice

Post, email or fax your completed form or report to our Centre Support Team as soon as possible.

Then

- We will acknowledge your report within 3 working days of receipt
- We will arrange for appropriate Buttercups personnel to review the report and commence the investigation

- We will aim to action and resolve all investigations within 10 working days of receipt of the report
- We will advise you of the outcome of our investigation within 2 working days of making our decision

When we receive your report, we will allocate a panel comprising Buttercups senior personnel and, where appropriate, external advisors such as external verifiers. The panel will review the report and supporting evidence and carry out the investigation.

The investigation process

During the investigation the panel's review may involve:

- A request for further information
- Interviews (face to face or by telephone) with personnel involved in the investigation
- Arranging for Buttercups staff to carry out a workplace visit
- Informing the Regulatory/Awarding body. Where applicable, we'll inform the appropriate regulatory authorities of any investigation into suspected or actual cases of serious malpractice and will agree the appropriate course of remedial action with them. Please note that in exceptional cases, the regulatory authorities may lead the investigation

We will make informed decisions based on the evidence.

We will protect the identity of the 'informant' as required.

We will also share information with other external parties, as required.

Learner malpractice

If the investigation confirms that learner malpractice has taken place, we may have no alternative but to impose one or more of the following sanctions on the candidate. Please note that this list is not exhaustive:

- Disallowing all or part of the candidate's assessment evidence
- Disallowing all or part of the candidate's external assessment marks
- Not issuing the candidate's certificate(s)
- Not accepting any further registrations for the candidate
- Disqualification from the programme

In cases of malpractice by learners, you should make your learners aware that their final results may be void if the case is proven and any certificates which have already been issued may be deemed to be invalid and will need to be returned to the awarding body.

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact our Centre Support Team.