Standard operating procedure (SOP) · WRK-SOP-010 · Version 1.0 · Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

Supports: 2E.10

At a glance

- Handle every speak-up report under WRK-POL-005.
- Protect the reporter from any detriment, and record every protection step.
- Investigate retaliation complaints as a separate matter.
- Check on protection at 3 and 6 months.
- Stop and get help straight away if: a retaliation complaint has been made and no investigation has started within 10 working days.

1. Purpose

To set how speak-up reports are investigated and how the people who raise them are protected [EC].

2. Scope

Applies to	All speak-up reports and all retaliation complaints
Locations	All services
When	From the day a report is received until protection is confirmed at 6 months
Does not apply to	Routine grievances (WRK-SOP-005)

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Retaliation	Any unfair treatment, such as dismissal, demotion, exclusion or a hostile change of duties, because a person raised a concern
Protection plan	A short written plan for how the reporter will be protected

4. Background

Protection is what makes speak-up real. Without it, staff stay silent. A written protection plan is the test of whether protection is taken seriously.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Competence
Speak-up lead	Receives and logs reports, and writes the protection plan	Trained in confidentiality
Investigating officer	Investigates the concern and any retaliation	Independent of the issue
Chief executive	Acts on immediate danger and receives the outcome	Executive

6. Materials and equipment

Item	Requirement	Condition
Speak-up report log	Confidential	Kept in a locked or access-controlled system

7. Safety

- The reporter’s identity is protected. Share it only with those who need it, and only with the reporter’s agreement where possible.

8. Before you start

- Confirm the protection plan template is available to the speak-up lead.

9. Procedure

Step 1. Log and assess.

- Log the report on the speak-up log.
- Assess immediate risk to patients and to the reporter.

Key point: Immediate danger goes to the chief executive the same day.

Step 2. Write the protection plan.

- Agree with the reporter what protection they need.
- Record it on the plan, with a named contact.

Key point: Protection starts before the investigation ends.

Step 3. Investigate.

- Start the investigation within 10 working days.
- Keep the reporter informed at least every 4 weeks.

Key point: Regular contact is a protection.

Step 4. Check protection.

- Check at 3 and 6 months for any detriment.
- Record each check and any action taken.

Key point: Detriment after a report is treated as a new, serious matter.

10. Decision points

- If a retaliation complaint is upheld, the chief executive decides the remedy and any action against the person responsible.

11. Special situations

Situation	Action
Reporter leaves the organisation	Protection checks continue for 6 months after leaving, where the reporter agrees.

12. Escalation

- Any upheld retaliation, or any report that cannot be investigated, is reported to the board chair within 10 working days.

13. Monitoring

Measure	Target	Frequency	Owner	If not met
Protection plans in place for each reporter	100%	Each report	Speak-up lead	Escalate to chief executive
Protection checks at 3 and 6 months	100%	Quarterly	Speak-up lead	Escalate to chief executive

14. Records

Record	Kept in	Retention
Speak-up report log and protection plan	Confidential speak-up files	Employment plus 6 years

15. Training

- Speak-up leads and investigating officers are trained in confidentiality, protection and fair investigation.

16. Related documents

ID	Title	Use
WRK-POL-005	Speak-up policy	Policy this procedure supports
WRK-SOP-005	Staff grievance and investigation procedure	Separate route for routine issues

17. Evidence

Reference	Note
E-006	ASF Policy Framework v1.2. Adapted.
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.

18. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approval
1.0	the date of approval	First version	set Expert Committee approval

E-learning for this document

- **Incident Reporting, Just Culture and Open Disclosure** (T-09)

References

- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Policy Framework v1.2. (E-006)
- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Expert Committee consensus on Standard 1. (E-009)

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