



TRUST FORUM - Raise a Concern Policy V8

A principal method of ensuring that TRUST certification is meaningful is the use of a Raise a Concern policy, i.e third parties who have become aware of wrongdoings by a TRUST certified business and who want to inform the TRUST Forum of those wrongdoings in order that they can be investigated and addressed quickly.

- Someone who raises a Concern can be a representative of an organisation acting in that capacity, or an individual (including individuals working in the company in question)
- Anonymity will be maintained where possible, but that there may be circumstances such as legal proceedings where their details will have to be shared with specific people involved in the investigation, which may include the merchant.



TRUST FORUM RAISE A CONCERN PROCESS

The process applies to all merchants who have received or are applying for TRUST certification.

In the first instance the person raising a Concern will contact the TRUST Administrator and ask for a copy of this process.

1. If they wish to proceed the person raising a Concern will fill out a simple form identifying the nature of the Concern and the date(s) on which the Concern was identified.
2. The TRUST Administrator will take an initial view on whether the Concern is to be investigated or is frivolous and/or malicious. The presumption is that the Concern is to be investigated unless serious doubts about its validity arise.
3. The merchant will then be given notice that they are being investigated.
4. The Investigator should be appointed on the basis of their expertise in the area of the Concern. This could include the Administrator.
5. The Investigator will refer to the Audit on file and compare it with the Concern.
6. The investigation will be carried out within a specific timescale (to be determined by the Investigator).
7. The Investigator will investigate the Concern, including visiting the merchant's premises if required.
8. The Investigator will deliver his/her verdict in the identified timescale, in the form of an evidenced recommendation to the TRUST Forum, which will be carried out by email. The recommendation will consist of one of the following:
 - a. The evidence upholds the Concern and is sufficiently serious to withdraw TRUST status immediately
 - b. The evidence is such that the Concern is warranted but that the merchant should be given an opportunity to correct the issue within a specific timescale, before TRUST status is withdrawn
 - c. The evidence does not support the Concern and no action will be taken.
9. The TRUST Forum will accept the Investigator's recommendation or reject it with reasons.
10. The merchant and the person raising a Concern will be informed of the Forum's decision.

The Administrator will present, at each Forum meeting, a list of all Concerns together with their statuses.