

Whistleblowing policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The intention is that this policy be reviewed annually by the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 1.2 If you see or find out about something you think is wrong at the Authority you should report it. You should go first to your line-manager or any other senior person. If you cannot or do not wish to do this for any reason you should follow this whistleblowing policy.
- 1.3 Raising concerns about wrongdoing can be one of the most difficult and challenging things to do in a work environment. Under this policy you may come forward with legitimate concerns without fear of being blamed or suffering any disadvantage for doing so.

2. What types of concerns can be raised by whistleblowers

- 2.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) 1998 provides protection for workers who reasonably believe that they are acting in the public interest and where the disclosure falls into one of more of the following categories;
 - A criminal offence that has, is being, or is likely to be committed
 - Unauthorised or inappropriate disclosure, misuse or loss of confidential, personal and / or sensitive information
 - A miscarriage of justice
 - Risk or damage to the environment
 - A danger to the health and safety of employees or others
 - Attempts to suppress or hide information relating to wrongdoing.
- 2.2 The concern can be about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now or that you believe is likely in the future.
- 2.3 As long as you hold a reasonable belief that the information is true then you will be covered by the protection set out in this policy regardless of whether you are mistaken or the matter cannot be proved.
- 2.4 Whistleblowing does not cover concerns where there is no public interest element such as a concern about your own employment or related matters. To raise a concern in relation to this please refer to the Authority's grievance procedure.

3. Making your claim anonymously

- 3.1 It is possible for you to raise your claim anonymously if you wish to do so. However, this may mean that it is difficult to investigate fully if you haven't provided us with enough information.

3.2 We assure you that we will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of staff and would encourage you to provide us with your name so we can fully investigate the matter. You may ask for confidentiality when doing so and we will respect this.

3.3 If you ask for confidentiality we will make every effort to protect your identity unless required to disclose it by law. If it becomes clear that we are unable to resolve the issue without revealing your identity we will discuss this with you, taking into account your views and our wider legal obligations before deciding whether or not to proceed with the investigation.

4. How to raise a concern internally

Step 1

4.1 Where possible you should raise any matter of concern, serious or otherwise with your line manager. This may be done either verbally or in writing.

Step 2

4.2 If you feel unable, for whatever reason, to raise the matter with your line manager, you may go to one of the team directors.

Step 3

4.3 If these steps have been followed and you still feel you have concerns, or that they have not been addressed, or that you cannot discuss the matter with any of the above then you should contact – the Chief Executive, the Chair or the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

4.4 When raising your concern it is helpful for you to provide an explanation with as much detail as possible including dates and times of incidents, any eye witness details and any supporting documents that you have.

5. How to raise a concern externally

Raising concerns externally

5.1 Where attempts to raise matters internally have been unsuccessful or, exceptionally, you feel you cannot raise their concerns internally, you may consider raising the matter with the relevant regulatory authority. For more advice on this you can contact the charity Protect on 0203 117 2520.

6. What happens next

6.1 The person who you raise the concern to will listen to and consider your concern in full and determine whether any action is needed. This may mean reporting it to a more senior member of staff or to the Audit and Risk Committee.

6.2 We will try to keep you informed about the actions that we are taking in relation to the concern including how we propose to deal with the matter, whether we

need further assistance from you, any action that is taken and the outcome of the investigation. However, we may not be able to provide you with much detail where we have a duty to keep the confidence of other people.

7. Whistleblowing champion

- 7.1 The Authority's non-executive whistleblowing champion is the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Frances Done.
- 7.2 If you have any comments or concerns about whistleblowing please contact her directly on frances.done@professionalstandards.org.uk

8. Support for whistleblowers

- 8.1 Whistleblowing may be very difficult. We will take every step to ensure we protect and support whistleblowers internally. However, we recognise that people may feel more comfortable seeking external support in this situation.
- 8.2 We would encourage whistleblowers to contact Workplace Wellness our free, confidential employee assistance programme on 0800 1116 387 for external support at any time before, during or after whistleblowing.
- 8.3 The independent charity Protect on 0203 117 2520 can also provide support. Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about at work. They will also provide advice on the circumstances in which it may be appropriate for you to contact an outside body

Document Control

Version Control

Printed documents are uncontrolled. This document is only valid on the day it was printed.

Version	Description of Version	Date Completed
1.0	Whistleblowing Policy	September 2008
1.1	Updating of job titles Reapproved by Audit Committee	December 2010
1.2	Reapproved by Audit Committee	December 2011
1.3	Reapproved by Audit Committee	December 2012
2.0	Redrafted after NAO government wide review.	April 2014
2.1	Updated after Annual review to include reference to C & AG as prescribed person	December 2014
2.2	Reapproved by Audit Committee	November 2015
2.3	Minor change to terminology in section 1.6	May 2017
3.0	Review and amendments made	September 2017
3.1	Reapproved by Audit and Risk Committee	February 2018
3.2	Addition of whistleblowing champion details	April 2018
3.3	Review undertaken	January 2019
3.4	Review undertaken	January 2020
3.5	Change to support details in sections 5.1, 8.2 and 8.3 and governance amendments	February 2020

Associated Documentation

Version	Description of Documentation
2.3	Fraud policy