



Whistleblowing policy

The aim of this policy

West Bletchley Council (WBC) is committed to achieving high standards of integrity and accountability. This policy provides a framework for employees, consultants or contractors to raise concerns which they believe are in the public interest and may relate to illegal, improper or unethical conduct.

This policy should be used where there are concerns about the consequences for other employees or the public and does not apply to matters relating exclusively to your employment. WBC is committed to achieving high standards of integrity and accountability and expects the same commitment from employees and those working for WBC. WBC aims to provide an open environment so that employees and those working for WBC can raise issues they believe to be in the public interest, with the confidence that they will be acted upon appropriately.

Employees will be protected from detrimental treatment, i.e. victimisation or dismissal, if they raise concerns. This procedure complies with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013.

Definition of whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the formal raising of concerns that are in the public interest (referred to as public interest disclosures).

Examples of concerns that may be in the public interest are shown below. This list is not exhaustive:

Public interest disclosures

- criminal offences;
- failure to comply with legal obligations;
- actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual;
- actions which cause damage to the environment;
- actions which are intended to conceal any of the above.

Raising a concern - the process

Employees are encouraged to raise their concerns with their line manager. On receiving a concern a manager will:

- clarify what is alleged by the employee;
- assess what action should be taken;
- record the employee's concern with the Clerk and in the investigation log.

Depending on the nature of the concern, the matter may be referred to an auditor, the police or another independent body. Decisions and any remedial action should be clear and fully documented on the investigation log. If the employee feels unable to raise the matter with their line manager or they believe that the line manager has failed to take appropriate action, they can raise the matter with the Clerk directly. At the conclusion of the investigation, the employee should be advised that the matter has been dealt with, and the outcome recorded on the confidential whistle blowing investigation log.

Concerns raised in confidence

Where a concern is raised in confidence, the council will protect the identity of the whistle-blower wherever possible.

However, there will be circumstances where this is not possible, as for example where the whistle-blower is an essential witness, and we would be unable to investigate a situation further without revealing the whistle blower's identity.

Should such a situation arise, we will discuss this directly with the whistle-blower. Any concerns raised anonymously will be considered but may prove more difficult or impossible to investigate due to the anonymous status.

Written records

Written records of concerns raised and their outcomes will be maintained by the Clerk. This will be in a form which does not breach employee confidentiality.

External Whistle Blowing

If you wish to raise a concern with an independent advisor then you could contact Protect- formerly Public Concern at Work - <https://www.protect-advice.org.uk>

Whistle-Blowing Policy Adopted on October 2021

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