

WHISTLEBLOWING

SPEAK UP
Let's work together against what's wrong.



Our Charter

- The Council and its leadership are committed to being open and honest. We are dedicated to creating a culture where employees, volunteers and contractors have the confidence to raise concerns, are supported without fear of reprisal or harassment and that all concerns will be considered and acted upon in an appropriate manner.
- We recognise that our employees are valuable eyes and ears and will be the first to know that something has gone wrong. We want to encourage early reporting to deter wrongdoing and to enable us to address issues at an early stage before they escalate.
- We are committed to protecting and support all those who consider they are raising a concern to benefit the Council and are not doing so for personal gain or for malicious reasons

The Council will:

- Maintain effective whistleblowing procedures which can be accessed by all employees, volunteers and contractors;
- Encourage employees, volunteers and contractors to feel confident to raise concerns;
- Consider all concerns and assess what action should be taken;
- Respond in a timely manner and ensure appropriate feedback is provided;
- Develop a culture of reflective practice where we learn and develop from our mistakes without allocating blame;
- Provide support and guidance so individuals understand their rights under current legislation; and
- Regularly develop and continuously promote our whistleblowing policy.

What is Whistleblowing

- **'Whistleblowing' is when an employee, volunteer or contractor raises a concern about a suspected wrongdoing/ unlawful act at work'**
 - Likely to be something witnessed at work
 - In the public interest
 - A protected disclosure

It can be something that happened in the past, present or being planned in the future

What does in the public interest mean?

- It will have an impact on others, such as
 - Public
 - other employees
 - service users/clients
- The impact must be greater than yourself (i.e. affecting others and not just you)
- Therefore not for reporting personal grievances or complaints relating only to your treatment

Protected Disclosures:

The law requires us to protect employees who make the following Protected Disclosures:

- criminal offence
- failure to comply with legal obligations
- miscarriage of justice
- damage to the environment
- unauthorised use of public funds
- fraud and corruption
- your employer is breaking the law
- deliberately concealing any of the above;

Why is Whistleblowing Important?

- Employees, volunteers and contractors are the eyes and ears of the Council
- You provide the early warning system and provide us with the opportunity to address things in the early stages, before it becomes a major issue
- Raising concerns can prevent wrongdoing
- Promotes accountability and personal responsibility
- Demonstrates that wrong-doing will not be tolerated and that we are a well-managed organisation
- Reduce costs, by reducing the incidence of fraud and corruption

The Council's Core Values

- **T**ogether
 - **O**pen
 - **W**illing
 - **E**xcellent
 - **R**espect
- Raising concerns and whistleblowing supports our values: Open and Respect
- ***It's also the right thing to do.***

Our Commitment to You

- Consider all concerns and assess what action should be taken
- Respond in a timely manner
- Provide feedback
- Develop a culture of reflective practice where we learn and develop from our mistakes without allocating blame
- Provide support and guidance so individuals understand their rights to make a Protected Disclosure
- Malicious or vexatious claims will not be tolerated and disciplinary action may be taken against those who make such claims
- We will provide the individual raising the concern with timely feedback, but confidentiality and criminal proceedings may limit our ability to provide detail on the final action and resulting outcome.

Raising a Concern

- In most instances with your line manager (though it is important that you do raise the concern with the person best placed to deal with the matter and with whom you feel most comfortable)
- There may be certain occasions when it would be inappropriate to raise the concern with the line manager, e.g. the concern may:
 - may implicate the manager in some way,
 - is about a senior manager within the line management chain or somewhere else in the department,
 - is particularly serious and needs to be dealt with as a matter of urgency
- With a Senior Manager, if not appropriate to raise with line manager
- With the Monitoring Officer (although you should have given serious consideration to the above internal options before doing so)

Raising with the Monitoring Officer

- Complete the 'Blow the Whistle' report form and which is available on the Council's intranet;
- By sending an email to the Monitoring Officer
Monitoring.Officer@towerhamlets.gov.uk;
- By letter addressed to the Monitoring Officer, 6th Floor, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BG
- By telephoning the Monitoring Officer on 020 7364 4800
- By appointment to discuss with the Monitoring Officer or a person appointed by him/her for that purpose
- Through a friend, a trade union representative, or a professional association representative

Seeking Advice

Before raising a concern you can seek advice from:

- A trusted friend
- Prescribed person
- Trade Union
- Public Concern at Work, Whistleblowing Charity
- Prescribed Body
- Line Manager

Do's and Don'ts

- Do read the policy and take advice either internally or externally
- Don't make false and malicious allegations
- Do report your suspicions, even if you think you might be mistaken
- Don't wait until it happens again, act early and prevent escalation
- Do maintain confidentiality unless you have been notified otherwise
- Don't gather the evidence yourself
- Do encourage and support those who speak out

Raising a concern and speaking out is a positive quality and something we should all be proud of and actively encourage

Have we Changed Your Understanding:

Do you think:

- If I speak out, everyone will dislike me and I might lose my job.

Or do you know believe:

- It's the right thing to do, how else will the Council know what is going on and be able to change.

- If I speak out I will be supported and protect from reprisals

If you don't
seek advice

Your legal advisor

Public concern at Work charity

Prescribed person's body

Friend or trusted colleague

How to raise a concern

Trade Unions

Senior Manager

Monitoring Officer

Scenarios

Whistleblowing Yes or No

- You notice a work colleague has claimed expenses for a journey in their car that they did not complete. This is not the first time they have claimed for an amount greater than they are entitled - **Yes**
- Your line manager regularly likes to tell your colleagues funny stories about you and the mistakes you have made in your work. You feel like the joker - **No**
- The employer liability insurance for the Council is due on the 31 March 2017. As it is year end you are asked by the finance director not to pay and to delay the payment until May 2017 - **Yes**

Consolidating the Learning

Why is whistleblowing important, please select whether you consider the statement to be true or false.

- You provide the early warning system and provide us with the opportunity to address things in the early stages, before it becomes a major issue - **True**
- If I raise a concern I will not be taken seriously and nothing will happen - **False** – (we are committed to taking all concerns seriously)
- Whistleblowing will not lead to any changes - **False** – (raising a concern enables us to investigate and take any necessary changes)
- Whistleblowing demonstrates that wrong-doing will not be tolerated and that we are a well-managed organisation - **True**
- Whistleblowing reduces costs and the risk of anonymous leaks - **True**

Consolidating the Learning

Why is whistleblowing important, please select whether you consider the statement to be true or false.

- Whistleblowing will be taken seriously and treated confidentially unless you tell us otherwise - **True**
- Whistleblowing should be discouraged and is a sign of a dysfunctional organisation - **False** - (whistleblowing is encouraged and a sign of an effective organisation that takes your concerns seriously)
- If I raise my concern anonymously the Council will not investigate - **False** – (anonymous reporting may limit our ability to investigate, but all concerns will be taken seriously and investigated)
- If I raise a malicious concern no action will be taken by the Council - **False**– (if you deliberately raise a malicious allegation, disciplinary action may be taken against you)

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