Whistleblowing

Overview and Scrutiny - Transparency Commission

7th September 2015

Council arrangements – whistleblowing

- Part of the Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy

- Refreshed annually and reported to the Corporate Management Team and Audit Committee

- Sets out the duty of the Council under Public Interest Disclosure Act

Anti fraud and corruption strategy – whistleblowing

- Types of disclosures
- What can be disclosed
- To whom
- How the Council deals with disclosures
- Safeguards for whistle-blower
- Step by step guide and next steps

Anti fraud and corruption strategy – whistleblowing

- Investigation based on risk assessment of:-
    - Whether council business
    - Credibility of concerns
    - Seriousness of disclosure
    - Experience / previous disclosure
    - Likelihood of securing additional information

Other ways of raising concerns

- Whistleblowing process is a supplement, and not substitute, for the usual channels for complaints. These channels are: -

  - Complaints procedure

  - Grievance and combatting harassment and discrimination procedure (CHAD)

  - Line management

  - Housing benefit fraud hotline

  - Council general enquiry hotline

  - External audit (KPMG)

  - Public concern at work

Staff Concerns

Employees code of conduct references whistleblowing and sets out expectations on staff to report concerns

Alternative routes for staff and others to raise concerns

Who raising concern	Type of concern	Procedure(s) to use
Member of staff	Issue about their own employment	Grievance, CHAD, Line Management
Member of staff	Concern over conduct of another staff member	Grievance, CHAD, Line Management, Whistleblowing (depending on nature of concern)
Member of public	Concern regarding a Council employee(s)	Complaints procedure, Whistleblowing, Freedom of Information request
Elected Member	Concern regarding a Council employee(s)	Whistleblowing, Members Enquiry
Council's Partners	Concerns regarding a Council employee(s)	Whistleblowing, Complaints procedure

Areas for Improvement

- Visibility of the whistleblowing process
- Clarity of routes for raising concerns
- Support for whistleblowers
- Improve culture of encouraging concerns to be raised

Proposed and Current Actions

- Review of the whistleblowing process – to include support available for those raising concerns and possible procedure/whistleblowing charter

- Publicise amended process – including different routes available to raise concerns

- Consider e-learning module

- Evaluate the procedures for staff concerns regarding actions of Elected Members

- Member Officer Protocol being reviewed

Further information:

- Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy - http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsl/800001-800100/800011_national_fraud_initiati/anti-fraud_and_corruption_stra.aspx
- ACAS Whistle-blowing in the work place guidance – http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1919