

Raise a Concern

As an employee you will often be the first to notice that something might be wrong - if you are concerned please tell someone! You can be confident that if you raise a concern within the Council you can do so without fear of any comeback or reprisal.

Serious concerns could include:

- Conduct which could be dishonest, fraudulent or corrupt.
- Conduct which is illegal.
- Misuse of Council funds.
- Health and Safety risks to employees or members of the public.
- Potential damage to the environment.
- Harassment or bullying.

PROTECTION

It can be a difficult decision to raise a concern, particularly if you are worried about the consequences of doing so. If your concern is genuine and not raised maliciously, the Council will take appropriate action to protect you. The Council will not tolerate any harassment, victimisation or informal pressure against you.

The Council will do its best to protect your identity when raising a concern, for example it may be possible to remove information from a witness statement, which might identify you.

You are encouraged to put your name to an allegation whenever possible because concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful.

PROCEDURE

As a first step, you should raise your concern with your immediate manager, you can speak to them or put it in writing. But if you believe that management or Councillors are involved, then you should approach one of the following first for advice and guidance:-

- Chief Executive Officer
- Any Director
- Head of HR and ICT
- Head of Finance and Audit

It is useful to provide as much information as possible such as times, dates, places, observations and witnesses. It is also helpful if the background of the concern can be set out, including any names of those involved and the reason why you are concerned.

You may wish to discuss your concern with a colleague who is feeling the same and then raise this together.

A "[Raise a Concern](#)" form is available and will be treated confidentially.

As soon as possible, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate. The matter may be referred to external agencies where appropriate: e.g. the Police, external auditor or some other form of independent inquiry.

If you have put your name to a concern you may be contacted to chat it through and you can have a colleague or trade union representative with you. The amount of contact you would have with the officer considering the issue will depend on the nature of the matters raised.

If possible, subject to any legal constraints, you would be kept informed as to the process.

How the matter can be taken further

If, you found you were not satisfied with the action taken and, as a last resort, you feel it is right to take the matter **outside** the Council, you can contact the following:

- The external auditor – Ernst & Young
- A trade union representative
- HM Revenue & Customs;
- the Financial Conduct Authority
- the Competition and Markets Authority;
- the Health and Safety Executive;
- the Environment Agency;
- the Independent Office for Police Conduct; and
- the Serious Fraud Office.

You may choose to raise the matter with an external body regardless of whether you have raised a concern within the Council. If you do take the matter outside the Council, take great care not to disclose confidential information.

Free independent advice is available from **Public Concern at Work**
Telephone (0207 404 6609) e-mail whistle@pcaw.otrg.uk or at
www.pcaw.co.uk.

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