

Whistle-blowing Fact Sheet

Doncaster Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and expects that Members and officers / employee at all levels will protect the Council and its resources and lead by example, ensuring high standards of personal conduct and adherence to the Council's policies, procedures and rules.

What is whistle-blowing?

Whistleblowing is basically the act of reporting concerns of wrong-doing so that they may be investigated and acted upon. The term whistle-blower is typically reserved for employees that whistle blow about actual or suspected wrong-doing within their own organisation. This policy however, is intended to cover employees, elected members, partners, customers or citizens. Whistle blows are always about serious concerns such as breaches of the law, endangerment of individuals or the environment or serious breaches of policy. These are different from complaints or employee grievances which typically only affect 1 person or a family and are usually about dissatisfaction with the level of service received or employment issues.

What sort of “concerns” are covered?

The whistleblowing policy covers a wide range of serious concerns. Some examples are shown below.

- **Corruption or Bribery** – The offering or acceptance of any form of incentive, money or other benefit, by an employee to do something that they know that they shouldn't such as award a contract to the bribing party or provide confidential or sensitive information to another party.
- **Theft** .- The taking of property that belongs to someone else, dishonestly and without permission with the intent to deprive them of it. Such as the taking of cash, stocks or assets such as vehicles or equipment.
- **Fraud** – an act of deliberate deception made with the intent to gain a benefit from that deception or cause a loss to someone else. This can include deception by making a false statement, representation or claim, by deliberately withholding information or by abusing a position of trust for the individuals own personal benefit.
- **Dangerous practices** risking the health and safety of employees, contractors or the public.
- **Acts that risk serious damage to the environment**
- **Abuse or bullying** of clients including children and vulnerable people,
- **Failure to observe procedures**, or breaches of The Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Procedure Rules.
- **Misuse of Assets** – The misuse of any assets for personal benefit such as vehicles, equipment etc

What happens when I raise a concern?

When you raise a concern to any of the people nominated in the Whistleblowing Policy, the details of your concern will be logged by the Monitoring Officer. If the issue raised is a complaint or an employee grievance, you will be referred to the correct procedure for raising such concerns. For all whistleblowing concerns, checks will be undertaken in the background to gather further information to attempt to find out whether the concerns raised are correct. Based on this, a decision will then be taken as to how is best to investigate the concern and who is best equipped to do this.

If you raise any concerns about fraud, bribery or theft, Internal Audit Services will also be informed so that the details can be recorded on the fraud register.

Can I raise a concern without giving my name?

People are often reluctant to raise concerns because they fear what could happen to them as a result. The Council will not tolerate harassment or the victimisation of those that raise such concerns and will take action against such instances.

You don't have to give your name or contact details when making a whistle blow. If you choose not to give your name, it may make it harder for us to investigate your concerns as we won't be able to ask you further questions or get further clarification on your concerns. This could mean that we may not be able to investigate your concerns fully or that we are unable to take further action if we are unable to find any other evidence other than your observations / statements.

Employees can receive guidance in confidence with regard to a whistleblowing matter through a whistleblowing support officer located in Human Resources OD who will be allocated on request to the Assistant Director of Resources and Organisational Development.

How do I report a concern?

Concerns are best raised in writing but we recognise that this is not always possible. However you choose to report your concern, you should try to give us as much information as possible about it. Such as, who the concern is about, what actions you are concerned about, times, dates, places, details of other people who may have witnessed the issue, whether the action you are concerned about is a one off or whether there have been other examples of it and details of anyone else that may be involved. It is also helpful to give us background information on how you are aware of the concerns if you can.

If your concerns relate to an immediate threat to life or terrorism, you should call the Police by telephone on 999.

Other whistleblowing concerns can be raised by with the following officers: -

- The Monitoring Officer Roger Harvey TheMonitoringOfficer@doncaster.gov.uk.
- Head of Internal Audit Colin Earl
- Director of Finance and Corporate Services Simon Wiles
- The Assistant Director for Financial services Steve Mawson
- The Assistant Director of Human Resources Jill Parker
- The Chief Executive Jo Miller

If you prefer to send in your details by post, please address it to:-

The Monitoring Officer,
Civic Office, Waterdale, DN1 3BU,