

### How to raise a concern a concern

A whistleblowing concern can be expressed verbally, in writing, or by sending an email. However, if the employee/agency worker is concerned that nobody else accesses this information, even unintentionally, then the surest method is a personal conversation (either face-to-face or by telephone) as correspondence is commonly opened by administrative staff and senior managers sometimes arrange for a personal assistant to open their emails.

Employees may use the following secure email addresses if they wish to raise a Whistleblowing concern via email – Employee Whistleblowing (Internally) or [Employee.Whistleblowing@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Employee.Whistleblowing@northtyneside.gov.uk) (Externally).

Emails sent to these email addresses can be accessed by:

- a. The office of the Chief executive
- b. The office of the Monitoring Officer
- c. The office of the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer)

If an employee does not wish for these groups to view their email they should not use this email facility.

### Types of conduct that would be covered by the whistleblowing procedure

Employees and agency workers may use this procedure to raise concerns regarding the following:

- a. Criminal offences
- b. Bribery
- c. Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- d. Miscarriages of justice
- e. Risks to health and safety
- f. Environmental damage

An employee's / agency worker's concerns may be about:

- a. an action or omission that took place in the past;
- b. improper conduct occurring in the present; or
- c. the prospect or likelihood of an action or omission occurring in the future.

Examples of the types of conduct that might justify an employee/agency worker raising a concern through this procedure include:

- a. the use of unsafe equipment or unsafe working practices;
- b. abuse of vulnerable persons/children in, for example, a care home;
- c. the employment of illegal immigrants;
- d. concealment of a chemical spillage that might damage the environment;
- e. false returns to HM Revenue & Customs;
- f. falsification of financial records; and
- g. breach of financial regulations or contract standing orders.
- h. Concealment of bribery or attempted bribery

### **Confidentiality**

The whistleblower's identity will, so far as is possible, be kept confidential.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

The purpose of this procedure is to encourage employees and agency workers to express their concerns and to give them protection from any adverse consequences of doing so.

Concerns expressed anonymously will be investigated but do not carry the same weight as those that people have put their name to.

### **Safeguards / Malicious allegations**

An employee or agency worker must not suffer a detriment for raising a concern under this procedure. There are legal consequences to the Council if this occurs. In these circumstances, disciplinary action may be taken against the individual who caused the detriment.

Any allegation made maliciously or for personal gain may lead to action being taken under the Discipline Procedure (this does not apply to agency workers who are not covered by the Council's Discipline Procedure. In these circumstances the agency should be notified so appropriate action can be taken against the agency worker).

### **Conduct of councillors and the Elected Mayor**

If an employee or agency worker has a concern over the behaviour of a councillor or the Elected Mayor then they can raise their concern with the Council's Standards Committee. This should be submitted by way of a Complaint Form, which is available by clicking on the link below, or from the Council's Standards Committee Webpage or the Monitoring Officer. The Standards Committee will decide whether the allegation falls within its remit and whether it should be investigated. If so, the Standards Committee will decide whether to refer the matter to the Monitoring Officer for local investigation or whether to refer it to Standards for England to investigate the matter. A copy of the Standards Committee complaint form is available on the intranet ([click here to access](#)). To access the Code of Conduct for Members [click here](#).