

Whistleblowing Policy

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1. Aim

The Policy is aimed to ensure individuals feel confident raising serious concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice within the organisation.

It is also intended to ensure people receive a response and feedback on any actions taken to the concerns they have raised.

Lastly, it is aimed to reassure the whistle-blower they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosure in good faith.

2. Principles

Whistleblowing is the common term for making a protected disclosure in the public interest where the interest of others or the organisation are at risk.

Whistleblowing is reporting malpractice or illegal acts at work and the whistle-blower is not usually affected directly or personally by the matter involved.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all CPCA employees and other workers, including freelance staff, temporary and agency staff, consultants, contractors (and their staff), volunteers and employees in organisations which work in partnership with the Authority.

In this Policy the term “employee” refers to employees of CPCA and other workers to whom the Policy applies.

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4. Vision and Values

Our vision is for a prosperous and sustainable Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Driven by our values and using our collective voice and strengths, we seek inclusive good growth for an equitable resilient, healthier and connected region.

Our values define what is important in the way we deliver this vision. At Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority our core values are Collaboration, Integrity, Vision, Innovation and Leadership. We are committed to ensuring our culture enables our employees to display these values regardless of their roles within the organisation. Managers and employees alike must ensure our core values are upheld when implementing this policy.

5. Confidentiality

CPCA will be sensitive to the persons reporting the concerns. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the whistle-blower without their permission.

In some circumstances, the Authority may be obliged to disclose the name of the whistle-blower i.e., when ordered by the court.

6. Reporting a concern

Reporting a concern will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter and who is suspected of the wrongdoing. Employees can raise their concerns with:

- Line Manager
- Corporate Director
- The Monitoring Officer and The Chief Executive via email – whistleblowing@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk
- Internal Audit Function.

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- By calling the Free 24 hour Confidential Helpline from Health Assured – 0800 047 4037.

Confidential Whistleblowing

If you believe you've witnessed wrongdoing in the workplace, we're here to help. Health Assured offer a completely confidential, 24/7 freephone whistleblowing helpline.

Use it to disclose:

- Criminal offences
- Breaches of legal obligation
- Miscarriages of justice
- Dangers to health & safety
- Damage to the environment
- Attempts to conceal any of the above

Free 24 Hour Confidential Helpline:

0800 047 4037

healthassuredeap.com

FAQs

What is a whistleblowing service?

A whistleblowing service is a confidential, freephone helpline. You can use this to report issues and wrongdoings that you have witnessed, or strongly believe are happening in the workplace.

Will I remain anonymous?

You don't need to give your name when blowing the whistle, and calls are not recorded. An advisor will note down the details—date, time, location and description of the incident—and move forward from there.

Workers who blow the whistle are protected by law.

What happens next?

The advisor will get in touch with your organisation's whistleblowing contact. Your personal details will not be provided, just the details you've reported.

Is the Service 24 hours?

Yes, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

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7. How to report a concern

In majority of the cases, an employee who wishes to report a concern under the whistleblowing Policy would be expected to contact their Corporate Director in most cases. We encourage employees to raise concerns in writing as soon as they become aware of them. They will need to provide the following information:

- the nature of your concern and why you believe it to be true
- the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates).

Anonymous Reports

Anonymous allegations are those which are not signed and unidentifiable. All reports will be investigated, but employees should be aware that anonymous allegations are more difficult to investigate and so may not be effective in solving the alleged malpractice.

The credibility of the allegation and likelihood of obtaining information from other sources to confirm the allegation will be considered when deciding what action to take in response to an anonymous allegation.

Untrue Allegations

If an employee makes an allegation in good faith and reasonably believing it to be true, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, the Authority will recognise the concern and respond accordingly. However, if, the allegation is made frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action, may be taken against the employee.

8. How the Combined Authority will respond to a concern

The Authority will aim to respond to concerns without delay. It will not be possible for an employee to prevent a matter from being investigated by subsequently withdrawing their concerns.

If urgent action is required to safeguard individuals or property or to preserve any evidence the Monitoring Officer/Lead Manager will immediately take the action required.

Once the report has been received by the Line manager or Corporate Director, they will register the report with the Monitoring Officer within 7 working days. Details provided to the Monitoring officer must include:

- Date report of concern received
- Name of person reporting concerns
- Details of the concerns reported
- Proposed action and by whom.

The Corporate Director will be the Lead Manager and responsible for all report of concerns raised. They may assign the role of Lead manager to another senior manager where needed.

To protect all parties involved and the Authority, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether

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an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. In some cases, there may be the possibility to resolve the reported concerns informally without the need for a detailed investigation.

The Lead Manager will need to make a judgement about whether the concern reported should be dealt with under other procedures (the concern may not meet the criteria for Whistleblowing) or under the Whistleblowing Policy. This decision will be made following consultation with the Monitoring Officer and/or with the officer responsible for the operation of the procedures they think might be more appropriate to follow.

The Lead Manager is responsible for appointing an appropriate senior manager or external investigator as Investigating Officer. If the allegation involves or may involve wrongdoing by an employee, the Investigating Officer must be senior to the person under investigation.

Usually, within ten working days of a concern being raised, the lead manager will write to the whistle-blower detailing the information below:

- acknowledging that the concern has been received
- stating what steps have been taken and what action will be taken and by who (including the name of the Investigating Officer)
- an approximation of how long it will take to provide the final response
- information with employee support programmes i.e., EAP

The Investigating Officer will conduct the investigations to establish the facts of the reported concern and will make a written report with supporting documentation such as witness statements and other evidence to the Lead Manager.

All employees subject to this process of alleged concern will be entitled to be accompanied by a trade union representative or a colleague who is not involved in the area of work to which the investigation relates. In some cases, suspension from work may be appropriate during the investigation.

The Investigating Officer will keep the person who reported a concern informed of progress with the investigation and would inform them and the Lead Manager if the investigation is taking longer than estimated.

Following submission of the investigation report, the Lead Manager will be responsible for ensuring the necessary action is taken. This may include disciplinary action where appropriate against the subject or reporting the matter to the Police or other regulated authority. This decision will be taken after consultation with the Monitoring Officer.

In situations, where there is no case to answer the authority will take reasonable steps to meet with the subjects and remedy any issues that may have occurred from the investigation.

To conclude the process, the Lead Manager will also meet with the whistle-blower to give a final the conclusion of the investigation, feedback and any action taken. This will not include details of any disciplinary action, as this is confidential. If the whistle-blower is not satisfied

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with the outcome of the investigation, they may choose to report their concerns via email to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee and for the purpose of notification, include the Monitoring Officer within the email.

Within 7 working days of meeting with the whistle-blower, the Lead Manager must update the register by notifying the Monitoring Officer of:

- any resolution of the complaint without the need for investigation
- any referral for investigation under another policy
- any decision not to investigate a complaint.
- where investigated, the date of completion of the investigation.
- findings of the investigation
- action taken by the Lead Manager.

9. Document retention

All information relating to the report of concerns and its investigation must be retained by the Corporate Director. Any paperwork provided will be stored and/or destroyed in accordance with the CPCA's Data Retention Schedule.

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GOVERNANCE: WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

References:

Data Retention Schedule

Issue date:	2023
Version number:	1
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Document control sheet

Purpose of document	This document provides useful information on the Whistle blowing process
Type of document	Policy
Document checked by Legal	No
If applicable, has an initial Equality Impact assessment (EIA) been completed?	Yes
Document Lead and Author	HR Team
Dissemination	
What other documents should be read in conjunction with	Document listed in this guidance;
Who will review the document (job title)	HR Team
Why is this document being reviewed	Review of existing Policies and Procedures

Revisions

Version No.	Page/ Paragraph No.	Description of amendment	Date approved
2	2	Name of Chief Executive	18/9/23
3	6	Individual names replaced by the joint email address.	11/07/2024