

CULLOMPTON TOWN COUNCIL



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Reviewed April 2015

1. WHAT IS WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing encourage and enables employees to raise a serious concern within the Council rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.

Employees are often the first to realise that there is something seriously wrong with the Council. However, they may not express their concerns as they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Council.

2. OUR COMMITMENT

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

3. WHO DOES THE POLICY APPLY TO

The policy applies to all employees, (including those designated as casual hours, temporary, agency, authorised volunteers or work experience), and those contractors working for the Council on Council premises, for example, agency staff and builders. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with the Council in their own premises. The policy also covers Members.

The policy has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations and has their support.

4. THE AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To encourage you to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice.
- To provide avenues for you to raise concerns in confidence and receive feedback on any action taken.

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- To ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied.
- To reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made a disclosure in good faith.

5. WHAT TYPE OF CONCERNS ARE COVERED

- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation
- Disclosures related to miscarriage of justice
- Health and safety risks, including risks to public as well as employees
- Damage to the environment
- The unauthorised use of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual, physical or other abuse of clients
- Other unethical conduct
- Actions which are unprofessional, inappropriate or conflict with a general understanding of what is right and wrong

NB: Other procedures are available to employees e.g. the Grievance procedure which relates to complaints about your own employment. This policy also does not replace other corporate complaints procedures which are for public use.

6. SAFEGUARDS AND VICTIMISATION

The Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you provide a service.

The Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity. If you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

This policy encourages you however to put your name to your concern whenever possible. Please note that:

- Staff must disclose the information in good faith
- Staff must believe it to be substantially true
- Staff must **not** act maliciously or make false allegations
- Staff must **not** seek any personal gain

8. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

As a first step you should normally raise concerns with your immediate supervisor or their superior. This may depend, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach a member of the Council.