

Request 6956 – Personnel, whistleblowers

I write seeking information about your Local Authority's role as a prescribed body under the [Public Interest Disclosure \(Prescribed Persons\) Order 1999](#). I would be grateful if you would provide responses to me by email to the below questions please:

The context is that an external whistleblower is making a disclosure to your Authority about a matter in respect of which you are a prescribed body or person as per the above.

Response

Question	Answer
Q1 Does your organisation take action to protect external whistleblowers from unjustified treatment by their employers or others?	i. Yes – we anonymise details of those making the referral
Q2 Does any protection against unjustified treatment provided by your organisation extend to persons reporting on behalf of external whistleblowers?	i. Yes – we would anonymise details of those making the referral
Q3 Does any protection extend to proposed or intended unjustified action against an external whistleblower contemplated by his/her employer or another in respect of the disclosure?	i. Yes – This would depend on the circumstance.
Q4 Does your organisation offer any reward or bounty for information received from an external whistleblower in respect of information about which you are the prescribed body or person?	ii. No
Q5 Does your organisation publish for the public a step by step guide on how it follows up on external whistleblower information?	ii. No

Question	Answer
<p>Q6 Where your organisation does not feel itself to be legally competent to engage with a disclosure made by an external whistleblower, do you have a policy and process to refer that disclosure to another prescribed body/person/regulator or other agency better placed to deal with it?</p>	<p>i. Yes (please provide a copy of the policy, where written)</p> <p>We don't have a written policy. Our website provides advice on who to contact, and where appropriate would be referred directly. Examples include: food hygiene inspection and ratings</p> <p>We might not be the authority who has that jurisdiction (i.e. the HSE would investigate a death at a building site or the Trading standards - County Council - would deal with the sale/contraventions of food supplements etc. See also our role in health and safety</p>
<p>Q7 Where in the circumstances described in Q6 above, your organisation passes information to another prescribed body etc., do you have a policy and process to advise the external whistleblower that the disclosure has been passed to another body etc?</p>	<p>i. Yes (please provide a copy of the policy, where written)</p> <p>As above, the customer may be advised to contact other party directly – with referral details included on our website.</p>
<p>Q8 Where an external whistleblower may be dissatisfied with his/her dealings with your organisation, is there an appeals policy and process which engage someone who is independent of the investigating department?</p>	<p>i. Yes (please provide a copy of the policy, where written)</p> <p>The Council has a complaints policy for external referrals. This provides escalation route to independent person, and then to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.</p>
Question	Answer

<p>Q9 Does your organisation publish FAQ to advise and assist external whistleblowers considering making a disclosure to you?</p>	<p>i. Yes (please provide the FAQ or direct me to it) Information is published on the website as above, plus the Council has a complaints policy and a whistleblowing policy</p>
<p>Q10 Does all your staff which communicates with or otherwise manages external whistleblowers receive specialist and ongoing training for that purpose?</p>	<p>i. Yes</p>
<p>Q11 Where, following a disclosure to your organisation by an external whistleblower about a matter for which you are prescribed, an alleged act of retaliation occurs against the external whistleblower by the employer or another person, does your organisation investigate the alleged act of retaliation?</p>	<p>iii. It would depend on the facts</p>
<p>Q12 Please describe what criteria you consider in deciding whether to investigate information received from an external whistleblower about a matter in respect of which you are prescribed?</p>	<p>It would depend on the nature and quality of the referral. Anonymous and less detailed referrals may not be able to be pursued.</p>
<p>Q13 Does your organisation distinguish between public complaints and external whistleblowers?</p>	<p>ii. No</p>
<p>Q14 Apart from any information on your website, does your organisation undertake any public awareness programme(s) regarding whistleblowing?</p>	<p>ii. No Although there may be promotion around reporting made to the general public.</p>