

SERVICE POLICY

Whistleblowing

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Responsible Department
Service Assurance.

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INTRODUCTION

The Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer (CFO) are committed to running our organisation in the best way possible, supporting employees (and former employee's) who wish to report issues that they believe are improper or illegal, to help prevent and tackle wrongdoing.

This policy reassures employees that it is safe and acceptable to speak up and it enables them to raise concerns that they may have. We want to promote trust and transparency within our Service.

Employees are encouraged to report issues as soon as they can. Areas that are considered to be within the whistleblowing arena are:

- Criminal offences (Fraud, Corruption, Bribery etc.);
- Failure to comply with legal obligations;
- Miscarriages of justice;
- Actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual;
- Behaviour that is unethical and/or inappropriate;
- Actions which may cause damage to the environment; and
- Actions which are intended to conceal any of the above.

It does not matter if the issues reported turns out to be minor, providing that the intent was honest and done for the right reasons.

It is recognised that an individual may be worried about formally raising a concern. This Policy is intended to reassure that individual that their complaint will be treated seriously and that they will be treated with dignity throughout, and after the incident has been investigated.

KEY INFORMATION

2.1 Policy Statement(s)

2.1.1	We will support this policy with a clear whistleblowing procedure, so that our employees know how to report issues that they feel are relevant to this policy.
2.1.2	We will investigate all concerns raised by all whistleblowers, even if there is no evidence presented by them.
2.1.3	All whistleblowing reports will be treated seriously, consistently and fairly, even if no evidence is provided by the whistleblower.

2.1.4	We will handle all whistleblowing reports in accordance with relevant legislation including the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA).
2.1.5	We have a zero tolerance approach to matters associated with fraud and corruption, as laid out in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption statement detailed in the CFA Constitution (Section K).
2.1.6	We are committed to taking all reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of the whistleblower where it is requested, unless we are required by law to break that confidentiality.
2.1.7	We recognise that 'gagging clauses' in settlement agreements do not prevent workers from making disclosures which are in the public interest.
2.1.8	If a whistleblower reveals their identity, and request feedback, then this will be provided.
2.1.9	Employees who report a genuine concern under this policy will not be disadvantaged or subjected to any retaliation, such as harassment, victimisation or bullying.
2.1.10	If we are advised that anyone experiences problems after whistleblowing, then this will be investigated and potentially treated as a disciplinary matter.
2.1.10	If we believe that anyone makes an intentionally false or malicious report, then this will be investigated thoroughly and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
2.1.11	We will provide a mechanism and suitable information to enable employees (and former employees) to whistleblow.

2.2 Scope

2.2.1	<p>The Monitoring Officer, Treasurer, and the Deputy Monitoring Officer</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Whistleblowing Policy. This officer maintains confidential records, reporting outcomes of concerns raised to the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) and/or the CFO.</p>
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	<p>If the Whistleblowing event is regarding the CFO, this event will be reported (confidentially) to the CGC.</p> <p>All of the named officers have a responsibility to ensure that the receipt of whistleblowing concerns is dealt with appropriately and involve regulatory agencies as necessary.</p>
2.2.2	<p>The Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) This Committee will review the information supplied by the Monitoring Officer and decide on the appropriate course of action.</p>
2.2.3	<p>The CFO Will assist the Monitoring Officer in supporting any internal or external investigations. The Monitoring Officer will liaise with the CFO on the outcome of any whistleblowing event.</p>
2.2.4	<p>Line Managers In all instances, if a whistleblowing report is made to them, they are responsible for passing this onto the Monitoring Officer.</p>
2.2.5	<p>Employees In the first instance, employees should report concerns to their Line Managers. If they feel that this is not an appropriate course of action, then the whistleblowing needs to be reported to the Monitoring Officer.</p>

2.3 Name of Directly Supporting Procedural document(s)

<i>Document Name</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date Published</i>	<i>Department</i>
Whistle Blowing	5	Sept 2019	Service Assurance
Bullying and Harassment	9	Oct 2014	Human Resources

FURTHER INFORMATION

3.1 Impacted Policies

<i>Policy Name</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date Published</i>	<i>Department</i>

3.2 Other Impacted Procedure

<i>Policy Name</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date Published</i>	<i>Department</i>

3.3 Associated Non LFRS Documents

<i>Documents</i>	<i>Version</i>	<i>Date Published</i>
Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA)	n/a	1998

Document History *(admin only)*

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Any Policy Template enquires should be sent to the Policy Officer

Template Version 7