

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY
(Adopted by Council on 11 July 2007)

1. Introduction

All of us at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually these concerns are easily resolved. However, sometimes it can be difficult to know what to do.

The Council has introduced this policy to enable you to raise your concerns about malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. We would encourage you to raise the matter when you have a genuine concern rather than wait for proof.

2. Who may use this policy?

- Staff employed by the Council
- Councillors
- The Council's contractors and sub-contractors
- Agency and Temporary staff

3. When does the policy apply?

Use this procedure where you reasonably believe that you have information which tends to show malpractice such as a:

- Breach of legal obligation
- Criminal offence
- Breach of health and safety
- Environmental damage or
- Miscarriage of justice

Remember, the Council also has in place an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, which this policy is intended to complement.

It is inappropriate for you to raise your concerns outside the Council before you have voiced your concerns internally first, since doing so may weaken the protection given to you under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Where you have an employment grievance, the provisions of this policy will not apply. Please use the Council's Grievance Procedure. A copy can be obtained from the intranet, your manager or from Human Resources.

4. The Council's assurances to you:

If you raise a concern in good faith, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Of course the Council does not extend this assurance to someone who maliciously raises a matter they know is untrue.

The Council will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, it is recognised that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity, your details will not be disclosed without your consent. Your anonymity is protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. If the situation arises where the matter cannot be resolved without revealing your identity (for instance because your evidence is needed in court), the person investigating the matter will discuss with you how to proceed.

The Council will consider, as far as is reasonably practicable, concerns raised anonymously. Remember that if you do not reveal who you are, the person investigating the matter will be unable to give you any feedback. It will also make the task of investigating the allegation more difficult.

5. What the Council will do if you raise a concern:

Once you have expressed your concern, the matter will be looked into to assess what action should be taken initially. This may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. In the interim, the issue you raise will be acknowledged within 5 working days. You will be told:

- who is handling the matter
- how you can contact him/her
- whether your further assistance may be needed

6. How to raise your concerns:

Employees:

If you have a reasonable concern about possible malpractice, please raise it with your manager or Head of Service first. This may be done orally or in writing.

If you do not feel able to approach your manager or Head of Service, you should report your concerns to:

- your Director; or
- the Chief Executive; or
- the Director of Finance & Resources (Section 151 Officer); or
- the Head of Legal and Democratic Services; or
- the Corporate Anti-Fraud Manager; or
- the Senior Manager Internal Audit & Corporate Anti-Fraud.

Councillors:

Councillors should report concerns to:

- their Group Leader; or
- the Chief Executive; or
- the Director of Finance & Resources (Section 151 Officer); or
- the Head of Legal and Democratic Services; or
- the Corporate Anti-Fraud Manager; or
- the Senior Manager Internal Audit & Corporate Anti-Fraud.

Contractors, Sub-Contractors, Agency & Temporary Staff

You should report your concerns in writing to:

- the Chief Executive; or
- the Director of Finance & Resources (Section 151 Officer); or
- the Head of Legal and Democratic Services; or
- the Corporate Anti-Fraud Manager; or
- the Senior Manager Internal Audit & Corporate Anti-Fraud

The correspondence address is: Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, HP1 1HH. Please mark the envelope **“PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL- FOR ADDRESSEE’S EYES ONLY”**

7. Independent Advice

If you are unsure whether to use this procedure or if you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact the independent charity Public Concern at Work on (0207) 4046609. Their advisers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work. They will support you and advise you on the law and how best to proceed.