

KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION BRIEFING

ISSUE 10: MARCH 2017



NEW POLICY



POLICY REVIEW



REGULAR REMINDER

WHISTLE-BLOWING

POLICY OVERVIEW

In the course of employment with West Lothian Council an employee may become aware of serious wrongdoing in the council or have information regarding malpractice. The disclosure of such matters is clearly in the public interest and the [Whistle Blowing Policy](#) and accompanying [Whistle Blowing Procedure](#) provides employees with a mechanism to confidently report their concerns to ensure that any wrongdoing and malpractice within the council is recognised and addressed appropriately.

Whistle-blowing is the act of reporting suspected wrongdoing at work, otherwise known as making a public interest disclosure.

KEY INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

- The [Whistle Blowing Policy](#) should be used to report acts or omissions that give you cause for serious concern. Examples of such acts or omissions include:
 - a criminal offence such as the theft of money, materials and equipment or fraud (false or inflated expenses claims/bills for goods not delivered etc);
 - a failure to comply with a legal obligation or a council policy;
 - corruption or bribery;
 - negligence or abuse of customers or clients;
 - a miscarriage of justice;
 - a hazard that may be a danger to the health and safety of an individual;
 - damage to the environment; and
 - the deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above categories.

This list is not exhaustive. There may be other concerns that should be raised under this policy. Above all, concerns raised under this policy should be in the public interest.

- If you wish to make a disclosure you should raise the matter as soon as possible using the Whistle-blowing Hotline on 01506 282002 or the dedicated Whistle-blowing Inbox whistleblowing@westlothian.gov.uk Alternatively, you can raise the matter with your line manager, other senior manager or the council's Monitoring Officer (Julie Whitelaw, Head of Corporate Services).

- A whistle blowing will be treated in the strictest confidence and will initially only be discussed with other relevant persons for the purpose of seeking advice. However, it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality between you and the appropriate manager or designated individual if the disclosure leads to a disciplinary procedure or a criminal investigation.
- You will not be penalised in any way for bringing forward genuine concerns. Employees raising Public Interest Disclosures, by following the appropriate procedures, are protected by law from detriment including unfavourable treatment, harassment or intimidation.
- Where an employee has deliberately and maliciously made a disclosure they know to be untrue or unfounded, they will be subject to the rules of the council's disciplinary procedure.
- The whistle-blowing policy should not be used to raise complaints about your employment. Such complaints should be addressed using the council's Grievance Procedure or Procedure for Dealing with Complaints of Bullying or Harassment.

ROLL OUT ARRANGEMENTS

- Services should ensure that records are kept of the date that employee briefings were conducted and the employees who attended. Those records may be subject to internal audit at any given time to ensure that council employment policies are being properly disseminated throughout services.
- Employees should be encouraged to read the full Whistle-blowing Policy, Procedure and accompanying Guidance available on Mytoolkit and accessible from work and home at:
<http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2200/Policies-Procedures-and-Guidance>

HR Policy and Advice
March 2017