

# **WHISTLEBLOWING**

  

## **POLICY**

Original approved by PP&R Cttee 21 June 2000

Last Revised March 2026

**DOCUMENT CONTROL**

**Policy**

<b>Title:</b>	Whistleblowing Policy
<b>Owner:</b>	Human Resources

**History**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>	<b>Future Review Date</b>
1.1	January 2021	Routine review.	January 2021
1.2	March 2026	Routine review – change title to Whistleblowing Policy and use of term Whistleblower throughout, align policy with procedure to cover workers.	March 2031

**Committee Approval**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee Date</b>
1.0	PP&R Committee	June 2000

## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

(Covers ALL employees, Agency Workers, Trainees, Self Employed Workers)

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The principles and guidance outlined in this policy have been developed to implement the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) and to complement the provisions of the National Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees in Scotland, the Code of Conduct - Openness in Local Government, and the Code of Conduct for Employees as agreed by the council.

1.2 This policy for reporting concerns at work is based on the following principles:

- fair and reasonable treatment at work;
- the right to report concerns in the public interest;
- confidentiality;
- openness and accountability;
- honesty and integrity.

### **2. SCOPE AND APPLICATION**

In the course of work with West Lothian Council a worker 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 accompanying procedure outlines the steps to bring serious situations to the attention of the council. This policy and the accompanying procedure have been designed to provide guidance to workers on reporting incidents of malpractice or wrongdoing and indicates how matters will be dealt with thoroughly, discreetly and in a confidential way.

### **3. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SUPPORT**

- 3.1 For the reporting process to have credibility, workers must have confidence that any matter that is drawn to the attention of the council will be handled with discretion and tact. Therefore, one of the principles of the policy is that a whistleblower has the right to report a matter they consider to be in the public interest and the report will be treated confidentially. All whistleblowing complaints will be dealt with in the strictest confidence throughout the process and only discussed initially with other relevant persons for the purposes of seeking advice.
- 3.2 However, in some cases it may not always be possible to preserve anonymity between the whistleblower and the appropriate manager of the council or designated individual. The information or concerns expressed may lead to the whistleblower becoming involved in a number of processes such as a criminal investigation and/or the council's disciplinary procedure. In such circumstances, it may not be possible to guarantee anonymity to workers. This would be the case if the matter being reported is serious enough to involve agencies such as the police or an external agency like the Health and Safety Executive. The council will give the whistleblower as much support as possible throughout such processes.
- 3.3 The council recognises that it will sometimes be very difficult for someone to disclose their concerns especially if they relate to colleagues. Whistleblowers are assured that they will not be penalised in any way for bringing forward genuine concerns even if they relate to events, which occurred some time ago.
- 3.4 On receipt of a verbal or written disclosure, the whistleblower will be advised of the next steps and will be given indicative timescales for the matter to be progressed.

### **4. RECORD OF COMPLAINTS**

Depute Chief Executives will ensure that a record is kept of each complaint and the outcome of any investigation undertaken.

### **5. IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy will be implemented through the accompanying procedure in conjunction with briefing for managers.

### **6. REVIEW OF POLICY**

This policy may be reviewed at any time and at least every 5 years by the council in consultation with the recognised trade unions and other interested parties as determined by the council.