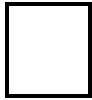


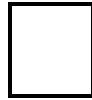
## KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

### EMPLOYEE INFORMATION BRIEFING

ISSUE 25: APRIL 2019



NEW POLICY



POLICY REVIEW



REGULAR REMINDER

#### WHISTLE-BLOWING

##### POLICY OVERVIEW

Should an employee may become aware of serious wrongdoing or malpractice in the course of his/her employment with the council, it is important that they are able to report such matters confidentially and without fear of victimisation.

Whistle-blowing refers to the act of reporting suspected wrongdoing at work, otherwise known as making a public interest disclosure. The council's Whistle-Blowing Policy and accompanying Procedure is the mechanism for reporting such concerns with a view to ensuring that they are properly investigated and appropriate action taken as necessary.

##### KEY INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

- This briefing is a further reminder of the information provided in Employee Information Script Number 10 issued previously in March 2017
- You should use the whistle-blowing reporting procedure to report acts or omissions that are giving you cause for serious concern. Examples of such acts or omissions could 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.), the use or supply of illegal drugs and substances in the workplace;
  - 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 and there are other matters that should be raised under this policy. Above all, you should only report concerns under this policy where you genuinely consider that it is in the public interest to do so.

- 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](mailto:whistleblowing@westlothian.gov.uk) Alternatively, you can raise the matter with your line manager, other senior manager or the council's Monitoring Officer (Head of Corporate Services).
- A whistle-blowing report will be treated in the strictest confidence and will initially only be shared with other relevant persons for the purpose of seeking advice. However, you should be aware that it may not be possible to preserve absolute confidentiality if the disclosure leads to a disciplinary procedure or a criminal investigation.
- You will not be penalised for reporting genuine concerns. Employees raising Public Interest Disclosures through the stipulated reporting procedures are protected by law from detriment including unfavourable treatment, harassment or intimidation.
- However if you deliberately and maliciously make a disclosure that you know to be untrue or unfounded, you are not protected under the law and you may be liable to disciplinary action.
- 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>