

## **Confidential Complaints Procedure (Whistle-blowing) A Guide for Suppliers & Contractors**

The Council is serious about tackling all forms of serious malpractice and requests the support of all suppliers and contractors to help take action before real damage is done by whistle-blowing.

The culture of turning a blind eye means that all too often the alarm is not sounded when things are wrong. The result of which is that people are not given the chance to take remedial action before it is too late.

We would ask all who have genuine concerns about the financial malpractice; miscarriage of justice; mistreatment of people; abuse in care; dangers to health and safety; risks to the environment; and cover-ups to come forward and voice those concerns, rather than overlooking the problem.

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns will be treated in the strictest confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

### **Anonymous Allegations**

Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered by the Council. However, if you do not tell us who you are, it will be much more difficult for us to look into the matter, protect your position or to provide you with feedback.

### **What Is A Serious Concern?**

This Policy is intended to cover issues which are outside the scope of the day to day complaints procedure. Complaints of a day to day nature should be directed to the Council's Complaints System.

#### **Serious concerns include:**

- ***conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law***
- ***disclosures related to miscarriages of justice***
- ***health and safety risks, including risks to the public***
- ***damage to the environment***
- ***unauthorised use of public funds***
- ***possible fraud and corruption***
- ***not working to expected standards and practices***
- ***breaching Council Standing Orders and policies***
- ***other unethical or improper conduct***

## How Do I Raise A Concern?

If your complaint is of a serious nature, such as those above, your complaint should in the first instance, be submitted formally in writing to:-

**Ray Williams**  
**Head of Procurement**  
**Corporate Procurement**  
**Finance Department**  
**Municipal Building**  
**Cleveland Street**  
**Birkenhead**  
**Merseyside**  
**CH41 6BU**

Or to:-

**Ian Coleman**  
**Director of Finance**  
**Finance Department**  
**Treasury Building**  
**Cleveland Street**  
**Birkenhead**  
**Merseyside**  
**CH41 6BU**

We will ensure that your complaint will be dealt with expediently and be treated in the strictest confidence.

## Can The Matter Be Taken Further?

This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue to raise major concerns about the way in which the Council conducts its formal business with suppliers and contractors. The Council hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If however, you are still unhappy with the outcome of a complaint, you have the right to take your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, which is not part of Wirral Council.

## What will happen when I raise a concern?

We will take action which may:-

- ***require an investigation***
- ***resolve the matter without the need for investigation***
- ***require urgent action being taken before any investigation is conducted***
- ***fall within the scope of specific procedures which will then be dealt with under those procedures***

***The Council will always act in the public's interest.***

We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance will be needed. We will write to you summarising your concern and explaining how it will be handled.

If you do have any personal interest in the matter, you will be expected to tell us at the outset.

We will inform you of the outcome of any investigation, subject to legal constraints or where this would infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.