



## Confidential Reporting/Whistle Blowing

### 1. About this policy

We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible, without fear of victimisation or harassment.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers and agency workers. External suppliers or partners should use this route if they do not feel comfortable using the organisation's published [Complaints](#) policy.

### 2. Internal whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations. Wrongdoing also extends to any perceived breaches of the Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Principles) or the OxLEP Code of Conduct for Board Directors.

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager who will take the necessary steps to ensure your concerns are acted on appropriately. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact the Director of Corporate Services, who is the organisation's Responsible Officer in respect of Whistleblowing. If you have raised the issue with your line manager they will pass the information on to the Responsible Officer on your behalf.

We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

Within 10 working days of the concern being raised the Responsible Officer will write to you to:

- Acknowledge that the concern has been received;
- Indicate how they propose dealing with the matter

- Give an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- Tell you whether any initial investigation or enquiry has been made;
- Tell you whether any further investigation will be made, and if not why not;
- Tell you how frequently OxLEP will keep you up to date on the progress of any investigations.

### **3. External whistleblowing**

In cases where a supplier, partner organisation or provider of services suspects wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities then they should feel free to report those concerns. We have a formal complaints policy, but they may feel a whistleblowing disclosure more appropriate even though they are not employed by the organisation.

The contact details at the end of this policy will provide a route through which they can raise their concerns in a confidential manner. OxLEP will seek to apply the provisions of this policy as much as possible in those cases.

### **4. Confidentiality**

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

### **5. Disclosures outside the organisation**

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

If you feel your concerns have not been dealt with to your satisfaction then you should contact the Monitoring Officer of our Accountable Body, Oxfordshire County Council, on the details provided below.

## 6. Protection and support for whistleblowers

We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. As a whistleblower you are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act ([PIDA](#)). Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform your line manager immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure.

We will not tolerate threats or retaliation against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

### Contacts

<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Lyn Davies Director of Corporate Services Tel: 0345 241 1196 Email: OxLEPwhistleblowing@oxfordshirelep.com
<b>Chief Executive</b>	Nigel Tipple Tel: 0345 241 1196 Email: Chiefexec@oxfordshirelep.com
<b>OxLEP Chairman</b>	Jeremy Long Email: Chairman@oxfordshirelep.com
<b>OCC Monitoring Officer/ Director of Law and Governance</b>	Nick Graham Tel: 01865 323910 Email: nick.graham@oxfordshire.gov.uk County Hall, New Road, Oxford. OX1 1ND
<b>Public Concern at Work</b> (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk