

Sunderland City Council

Whistle Blowing Policy Statement

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Background

The United Kingdom public sector maintains high standards of openness, honesty, integrity and accountability. Sunderland City Council shares these standards and is committed to maintaining high standards in the conduct of all its affairs.

As part of this commitment the City Council is committed to combating any acts of impropriety wherever they may arise in relation to any of the Council's activities or services. In achieving this aim, the City Council has put in place arrangements to ensure high standards are maintained and that any act of impropriety is prevented or is detected at an early stage.

The Council realises, however, that, despite its best efforts, impropriety (e.g. unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, conducting activity which may present a danger to the public, Council employees or the environment) can be discovered by chance. It is often through the alertness of not only its workers but members of the public, other authorities or agencies, service users, partners or suppliers / contractors etc. that impropriety is detected. Consequently the Council acknowledges the important role that these parties, including the local community, have to play in helping the Council to maintain high standards and are keen to involve them in its arrangements for the detection of acts of impropriety.

Commitment

The Council is committed to the principle that where any person, i.e. worker, Councillor, member of the public or any other external body, becomes aware of, or has concerns about, activity in the Council which appears to fall below its high standards of honesty, integrity, openness and accountability, they should be reported promptly to the Council or another appropriate body.

As part of this commitment the Council acknowledges the need to encourage any person who believes that there may be something seriously wrong within the Council or who may have concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. The Council is committed to creating and maintaining a culture whereby any individual who seeks to express concerns and suspicions may do so with confidence, without fear of repercussion or intimidation and in the knowledge that the information will be treated confidentially and will be investigated fully and rigorously.

Implementation

The Council is committed to establishing and maintaining effective reporting arrangements to ensure that, where an individual, whether an employee of the Council, a Councillor, any member of the public, has serious concerns regarding the conduct of any aspect of the Council's business, they can do so through a variety of avenues, promptly and in a straight forward way.

The framework in place to ensure the aims of this Policy are met are set out in two 'Whistle Blowing Policy Arrangements' documents, one for Council workers and one for members of the 'public'.

Awareness

The Council will seek to ensure that its policy and arrangements for Whistle Blowing are widely publicised both internally and externally to the Council.