

Whistleblowing Policy

Owned and maintained by:	Human Resources
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Introduction

1. Audit Scotland encourages an open culture in dealings between its employees and all people with whom we engage. In particular, we recognise that effective and honest communication is essential if concerns about breaches or failures are to be effectively dealt with and the organisation's success ensured.
2. All of us at one time or another have concerns about what is happening at work. Usually, these concerns are easily resolved. However, when they are about unlawful conduct, financial malpractice or actions that could damage the reputation of Audit Scotland it can be difficult to know what to do.
3. Audit Scotland has introduced this policy to enable all those who work with or within the organisation to raise their concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way. We would rather you raised the matter when it is just a concern rather than wait for proof.
4. If something is troubling you and you think we should know about it, please follow the section on how to raise a concern internally. However, if you are aggrieved about your personal position, please use the Grievance Policy within the staff handbook on Sharepoint. This policy is primarily for concerns where the interests of others or of the organisation itself are at risk. It should be read in conjunction with our Counter Fraud Policy.
5. There may be occasions when, due to individual acts, omissions or failings, it may be necessary to bring certain matters to the attention of Audit Scotland's Executive team. If you are concerned about an aspect of individual behaviour or practice, you should raise it. Your concerns may fall under one (or more) of the following categories:
 - A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.
 - A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which they are subject.
 - A miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
 - The health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered.
 - A person has supplied, is supplying or is likely to supply Audit Scotland and / or client information, without appropriate authorisation.
 - The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged.

- Information tending to show any matter falling within any of the above has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Personal and Vicarious Liability

6. Amendments made to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which came into force in 2013 included new rules introducing personal and vicarious liability. These changes mean that individuals can face personal liability to whistleblowers, and employers can be “vicariously” liable for the acts of their staff (irrespective of whether the acts are done with their knowledge or approval).

Our Assurances to you

Your safety

7. The Board and Executive Team are committed to this policy. If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of retribution as a result. Provided you are acting in the public interest, and Audit Scotland's Executive Team is satisfied you had a genuine belief of the wrongdoing committed and no personal gain was involved, it does not matter if you are mistaken.
8. If your concern is subsequently shown to be false or inaccurate, employees will be informed of the discrepancy between their report and the facts at hand.

Your confidence

9. We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern. However, we recognise that you may nonetheless want to raise a concern in confidence under this policy. If you ask us to protect your identity by keeping your confidence, we will not disclose it without your consent. If the situation arises where we are not able to resolve the concern without revealing your identity (e.g. because your evidence is needed in court), we will discuss with you whether and how we can proceed.
10. While we will consider anonymous disclosures, this policy is not appropriate for concerns raised anonymously.

How we will handle the matter

11. Once you have told us of your concern, we will look to assess what action should be taken. This may involve an internal inquiry or alternative formal investigation. We will tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request, we will write to you summarising your concern and how we propose to handle it, together, with the relevant outcome (once known) save for in instances where an obligation of confidentiality arises.
12. Due to the varied nature of these sorts of concerns, which may involve internal investigators and / or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer will ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality of the investigations.

13. The investigating officer will be a senior individual from Audit Scotland, but the officer will not work within the same business area from where a concern has been raised against.
14. When you raise the concern, you may be asked how you think the matter might best be resolved. If you do have any personal interest in the matter, you should tell us at the outset. If your concern falls more properly within the Grievance Policy, we will decide whether to uphold your proposal.
15. We will keep summary details of each whistleblowing matter raised and investigated to enable annual reporting of disclosures made under this policy.

How to raise a concern internally

16. Step one - If you have a concern about malpractice, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your manager. This may be done orally or in writing.
17. Step two - If you feel unable to raise the matter with your manager, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with the Chief Operating Officer or another member of the Executive Management team. Please say if you want to raise the matter in confidence so that they can make appropriate arrangements.
18. Step three - If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact Alan Alexander, Board Member on 07770 492 475 or Colin Crosby, Chair of the Audit Committee on 07976 631 836.

Independent advice

19. If you are unsure whether to use this procedure or you want independent advice at any stage, you may contact:
 - your union (if applicable); or
 - the independent charity Protect (formally known as Public Concern at Work) on 020 3117 2520. Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work. Alternatively, visit their [website](#).

External contacts

20. While we hope this policy gives you the reassurance you need to raise such matters internally, we recognise that there may be circumstances where you can properly report matters to outside bodies, such as regulators or the police. Protect (or, if applicable, your union) will be able to advise you on such an option and on the circumstances in which you may be able to contact an outside body safely.

