



Whistleblowing Policy

A short guide to Kingston Council's
policy on whistleblowing at work



www.kingston.gov.uk

If you require this document in another language or an alternative format such as large print or audio-tape, please contact the Council's helpline on 020 8547 5757.

Introduction

Kingston Council is committed to providing high quality services for residents in the Royal Borough. In order to do this, we aim to create a working environment for staff that is open, fair and honest.

The Council's Whistleblowing Policy has been developed to support staff in their role, whether they are directly employed by the Council or working on our behalf for a partner company or agency.

This short guide provides an overview of the Whistleblowing Policy. A full version is available on our website at www.kingston.gov.uk/whistleblowing

What is whistleblowing?

A member of staff 'blows the whistle' when they tell someone in authority about a dangerous or illegal activity that they are aware of through their work. This can include health and safety risks, environmental issues, fraud, poor standards of care and other problems. Often it is only through whistleblowing that this information ever comes to light.

Who can use the Council's whistleblowing procedure?

- All Council staff, whether full time or part time, permanent or temporary;
- Councillors;
- All staff working in schools (including volunteers and students);
- Contractors working for the Council on Council premises e.g. agency workers, builders or drivers; and
- Staff working for one of the Council's partner companies, including those providing services under a contract with the Council in their own premises e.g. care homes.

When should I raise a concern?

If you find out about something that could pose a risk to customers of the Council, colleagues working for the Council or the Council itself. These may include:

- Illegal activities
- Miscarriages of justice
- Risks to health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Misuse of public funds
- Fraud and corruption
- Abuse of clients
- Other wrongdoing, (including attempts to cover up wrongdoing)

Who do I tell?

If you work for the Council:

You should raise any concerns with your line manager. However, if you feel unable to do so or you are concerned about something serious, you can approach a senior manager, your Head of Service, a Director or the Chief Executive. You can raise a concern by talking to the person or by writing to them.

If you suspect fraud or corruption, you can approach the Assistant Director of Finance - Audit.

Staff in Social Services can approach the Customer Services Officer or any of the senior officers listed above.

If you work in a school:

You should approach the Head Teacher. However, if you feel unable to do so or you are concerned about something serious, you can approach the Chair of Governors, the Director of Learning and Children's Services, the Assistant Director of Finance - Audit or the Chief Executive. You can raise a concern by talking to the person or by writing to them.

If you work for an agency or are a temporary worker:

You should raise any concerns with your line manager. However, if you feel unable to do so or you are concerned about something serious, you can approach a senior manager, your Head of Service, a Director or the Chief Executive. You can raise a concern by talking to the person or by writing to them.

If you work for a company that has a contract with the Council:

You should raise any concerns with the Head of Strategic Services, tel: 020 8547 5175. Alternatively, you can contact the Assistant Director of Finance – Audit, tel: 020 8547 5660.

You can also write to the Head of Strategic Services or the Assistant Director of Finance – Audit at the following address:

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Guildhall 2
High Street
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 1EU

What happens next?

We will look into your concern to see what should happen. This may involve:

- An internal investigation
- An external auditor
- An independent inquiry
- The police

We will normally write to you within ten working days of receiving your concerns. We will list these concerns, tell you who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether we need any further information from you. We will also tell you where to get support if you need it.

Will I get into trouble? Will anyone find out that I have 'blown the whistle'?

Kingston Council does not allow the harassment or victimisation of anyone who raises a genuine concern. Any such harassment may result in disciplinary action.

However, there may be a situation where you want to tell us of your concern and not let anyone else know that you have done so. If we are not able to resolve the problem without telling someone else who you are, we will always talk to you about this first.

Where can I find out more?

You can find out more about the Whistleblowing Policy by:

- Visiting our Intranet site (Council staff and Councillors)
- Visiting our website at www.kingston.gov.uk/whistleblowing

