

Purpose

Our code of conduct sets out a clear framework for employee behaviour and confirms that every employee has a responsibility to adhere to the Council's commitment to integrity, respect and accountability.

Unfortunately, there can be rare occasions where employees act, or feel they have been required to act, in a way which conflicts with the principles of the Code of Conduct and sometimes this concern relates to wrongdoing that is **in the wider public interest**.

Raising such concerns is known as whistleblowing and we are committed to providing an effective way for employees to do this because when we are made aware of wrongdoing, we can investigate and stop it. This is important because such wrongdoing:

- diverts resources from those who need them;
- damages our reputation and undermines trust and confidence in us and;
- demoralises our employees and make their job harder.

But we do recognise that raising a whistleblowing concern can be daunting. This policy provides the principles we will apply to encourage and support employees to raise concerns made in good faith, investigate concerns and take appropriate action.

The policy is supported by guidance which is available on the Council's intranet and website. If you have any queries you can contact whistleblowing@fife.gov.uk

Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) provide protections from negative treatment for workers raising genuine concerns about behaviour which amounts to:

- a criminal offence;
- failure to comply with any legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- danger to the health and safety of any individual;
- damage to the environment; and
- deliberate concealment of information about any of the above matters.

Through implementation of this policy, we restate the protection given by the Act. We will inform employees of this protection and actively encourage employees and other workers to raise concerns they may have.

Guiding Principles

We will:

- Promote this policy and make it as simple and straightforward as possible for employees to report concerns.
- Encourage employees to raise concerns as part of their day-to-day work before the start of a formal procedure if appropriate.
- Treat all reported concerns seriously and, depending on the nature of the concerns, handle them as openly and as transparently as possible throughout the process.
- Provide guidance from Audit, HR and Legal Services in terms of the investigation and the appointment of the appropriate investigating officer, depending on the circumstances of each concern.
- Recognise and respect that everyone has the right to confidentially and protect, as far as possible, the identity of an employee who makes a report and does not wish their identity to be known.
- Protect employees who report concerns from any form of harm or disadvantage because they have reported or intend to report a concern and treat any bullying, victimisation, or harassment of those reporting concerns as misconduct.
- Ensure employees reporting concerns (or considering it) are supported.
- Where possible, acknowledge the receipt of all reports and inform the reporting employee of the progress of any investigation and its outcome as appropriate.
- Deal with suspected wrongdoing through our internal processes as far as is possible but involve external agencies immediately if it becomes necessary to do so.
- Deal with anonymous reports on their merits and investigate these proportionately, as far as is appropriate and possible.

Scope

This policy applies to all those directly employed by the Council (including casual/supply workers) as well as agency workers, those employed by Council contractors and volunteers who are working for or on behalf of the Council. For the purposes of this policy, all of these groups are 'workers'.

The policy does not cover individual concerns that do not relate to the public interest (as detailed above), and these should be raised through the appropriate procedure (for example the Council's Grievance Procedure or Complaints Procedure).

Version: 1.0

Date: 13/09/2023