

# HELPLINE FOR EMPLOYEES - DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

## Policy Statement

As a democratic organisation, Dundee City Council is committed to operating in an open and transparent manner. It will endeavour to act with integrity and honesty in all its transactions and to be fully accountable to the public.

The Council views malpractice or wrong doing of any description very seriously and welcomes any information or advice that will help to prevent this.

Employees have a duty to themselves, the Council and the public to bring attention to anything happening in the workplace that might be illegal, improper or unethical. The Council encourages employees to use the procedure below to disclose any concerns in order that they can be dealt with. Any allegations will be fully investigated and, if substantiated, appropriate action taken.

## Examples of Concerns that should be made known

The following are a few examples of malpractice/wrong doing. It is not an exhaustive list. Anything going on in the workplace, which an employee feels uneasy about because it is "not right", is likely to be worth reporting in order that someone not directly involved can check it out.

- Theft (money, materials, equipment, consumables, etc);
- Fraud (false expenses claims, bonus returns or timesheets, inflated claims from contractors for work done/materials used, bills from suppliers for goods not delivered, etc);
- Failure to comply with legislation;
- Failure to comply with Council policy (breaches of Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees, any impropriety in relation to registering or declaring an interest etc);
- Bribery/corruption (payments or favours to influence decisions);
- Health and Safety hazards;
- Environmental pollution;
- Gross incompetence;
- Negligence;
- Waste of resources.
- Discrimination (racial, sexual, religious etc.)
- Harassment (can also be dealt with via the Harassment Policy and Support Officers)

## Procedure

Ideally concerns should be able to be raised and dealt with confidentially within the Council.

1. If you have a concern that you are happy to report to your Line Manager, you should do so.

2. If you feel that you cannot discuss the matter with your Line Manager, you should write to or telephone the Council Helpline (Extension 4800), indicating whether you wish the issue to be dealt with by the Chief Executive, who is also the Council's Monitoring Officer, or the Head of Human Resources.
3. The helpline staff are trained to deal discreetly with all manner of complaints and enquiries from the public. They will assist employees to progress their concerns to the right person in confidence
4. Your line Manager, or the Chief Executive, or the Head of Human Resources will decide what action is to be taken
5. Depending on which one you decide to approach, your Line Manager or the Chief Executive or the Head of Human Resources will decide (jointly if appropriate) what action is to be taken. This could include further investigations e.g. by Internal Audit, leading to disciplinary or legal action against any wrong doers. If the matter mainly affects you personally you might be advised to pursue it via the Council's Grievance Procedure with the assistance, if required, of your trade union.
6. The confidentiality of your concern will be maintained where possible. If you identify yourself, appropriate advice on the outcome will be given to you where possible. If you choose to report your concern anonymously, it will still be treated seriously. However, the lack of dialogue may make investigation more difficult and render feedback impossible.
7. Provided a concern is reported in good faith, if the investigation finds nothing amiss, there will be no reflection on the employee concerned. However, anyone making deliberately false and malicious allegations will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. Similarly, threatening or trying to deter an employee from raising legitimate concerns will be regarded as serious misconduct and dealt with accordingly.
8. Using the Helpline will not affect any rights under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects employees who disclose certain information to their employer or any other responsible person.
9. It is preferable for matters to be dealt with satisfactorily within the Council. However, if you are unhappy at the progress or outcome of your concern and believe that maladministration may have occurred, you have the option of taking it to the Local Government Ombudsman, who will advise on whether the matter falls within his jurisdiction and may decide to carry out an independent review. If you would like more information from the Ombudsman telephone (0131) 225 5300, fax (0131) 225 9495 or write to the Local Government Ombudsman, 23 Walker Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7HX or freepost EDINBURGH EH3 0EE.

It is in the interests of the Council and its employees that any external scrutiny is conducted objectively by a reputable person with investigatory powers, such as the Local Government Ombudsman.