

Whistle-Blowing Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At one time or another staff may have concerns about what is happening at work, for example, concerns about:
- Conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law
 - Health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
 - Damage to the environment
 - The unauthorised use of public funds
 - Possible fraud and corruption
 - Other unethical conduct
 - Homophobic, racial, religious, sexual or physical abuse of clients, staff and members.
 - Conduct which makes staff feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, their experience or the standards they believe the County Council subscribes to; or
 - Conduct which is against the Authority's Financial Regulations and policies falls below established standards of practice.
- 1.2 Staff may be worried about raising such issues, feeling that to do so would be disloyal to colleagues, managers or to the organisation.
- 1.3 "Whistle blowing: Procedure and Guidance" is included in Section 5b of the County Council's Constitution, and gives guidance to staff who wish to raise issues, and line managers with whom such issues are raised. The Constitution can be viewed on the County's intranet site at <http://www.intouch.ccc/> under "Corporate Information".
- 1.4 Cumbria County Council has introduced this procedure to enable staff to raise their concerns about such malpractice at an early stage and in the right way.
- 1.5 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 sets out to provide a simple framework to promote responsible whistle blowing. The Act provides strong and clear protection for workers who raise concerns about malpractice internally, and, where they have good reason for doing so, externally.
- 1.6 Concerns raised through the whistle-blowing policy are distinct from complaints or issues raised through the grievance procedure. Under a whistle-blowing policy, an employee raises a matter so that others may investigate it; it is not for the employee to prove the case.

2 **Hot line number**

The Council has set up a free phone fraud hotline number **0800 389 2330**. Any concerns will be logged and passed to the appropriate person. Please note that this number should be used for reporting genuine cases of the suspicion of irregularities only, examples of which are provided in the Policy, and not for reporting issues that should be addressed through routine management processes.

3 Summary

- 3.1 ***This policy provides staff with a mechanism to raise legitimate concerns they have about issues of potential malpractice in the work place.***
- 3.2 ***The policy offers staff confidentiality in raising such concerns.***

3.3 ***Staff raising such concerns are provided with statutory protection by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.***

Further support is available from Public Concern at Work. Public Concern at Work is a national charity, launched in 1993, which aims to promote accountability and good governance in organisations. They have a confidential legal help line that offers advice and support in relation to whistle blowing.

- Public Concern At Work
- Suite 306,
16 Baldwin's Gardens,
London
EC1N 7JR
- Telephone: 0171 404 6609
- Web: <http://www.pcaw.co.uk>