

PRESCOT TOWN COUNCIL



WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

What should you do if you suspect misconduct at work?

How should you react if you suspect misconduct, fraud, or other improper activity in the workplace?

What action should you take?

Who should you inform?

Should you inform anyone at all?

What should you do with the evidence?

This Policy will help you answer these questions and other issues you might have if you suspect misconduct, fraud, or other improper activity in the Council.

Why Should You Read This Policy?

Most public sector organisations are affected in some fashion by misconduct, fraud, or corrupt activity.

Prescot Town Council is committed to combating misconduct, fraud and corruption by employees or Members of the Council who abuse their position of trust.

To this end the Council has provided this Policy Guidance note to support whistle blowing and confidential reporting to enable employees and staff within contracting and partner organisations to raise, in good faith, any concerns they may have without fear of victimisation.

Your concerns may be for example:

- health and safety risks
- damage to the environment
- abuse of vulnerable clients
- fraud and corruption
- any conduct which is illegal

The procedure recognises that employees and staff within contracting and partner organisations need to be assured that their concerns have been properly addressed. Therefore, subject to legal constraints, you will be informed of the outcome of the case.

This leaflet gives guidance on what you should and should not do if you suspect misconduct, fraud or other improper activity involving Prescot Town Council.

Acting Upon Your Suspicions - the Do's and Don'ts

If you have concerns within the workplace, there are a few simple guidelines that should be followed:

Do

1 Make an immediate note of your concerns.

Note all relevant details, such as what was said in telephone or other conversations, the date, time and the names of any parties involved.

2 Convey your suspicions to the appropriate person.

Report your concerns to your line manager. If you prefer to speak to someone else you can contact the Leader of the Council, if you feel you need to speak to someone outside the Council you could contact the Monitoring officer for the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley (elected members) or the Head of Counter Fraud and Internal Audit for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (Council officers) both available on 0151 489 6000.

3 Deal with the matter promptly, if you feel your concerns are warranted.

Any delay will result in the problem continuing, and perhaps worsening.

Don't

1 Do nothing.

2 Be afraid of raising your concerns.

You will not suffer any recrimination as a result of voicing a reasonably held suspicion. The Council's procedures require that firm and appropriate action is taken whenever misconduct, fraud, or corruption is suspected or discovered. Any matter you raise will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially.

3 Approach or accuse any individuals directly.

4 Try to investigate the matter yourself.

There are special rules relating to the gathering of evidence for use in criminal cases. Any attempt to gather evidence by people who are unfamiliar with these rules may spoil the chance of a satisfactory outcome to the case. The Council have specialists that are trained in handling investigations in the proper manner.

5 Convey your suspicions to anyone other than the appropriate officers.

6 Use this procedure to pursue a personal grievance.

Summary

- Note all relevant details but do not attempt to investigate the matter further yourself.
- Report all suspicions promptly
 - to the Town Clerk
 - the Leader of the Town Council, or to
 - the Monitoring officer for the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley
 - the Head of Counter Fraud and Internal Audit for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
- If in doubt, report your suspicions anyway. The Council will take appropriate action in all cases.