

**Standards Committee – 13th October 2010**

**Report of the Monitoring Officer**

**Confidential Reporting Policy**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To monitor the operation of the Council's Confidential Reporting Policy.

**Background**

2. Within its terms of reference the Standards Committee is responsible for advising the Council on its confidential reporting (i.e. whistle-blowing) policy and monitoring its operation.
3. The Policy was first introduced in July 1999 and was last updated in July 2007. The Standards Committee also considered the Policy in 2009. A copy of the policy with proposed amendments is attached at Appendix 1.
4. In my capacity as Monitoring Officer I regularly monitor the Policy by surveying each directorate and asking a number of standard questions. The latest survey was undertaken during the Summer of 2010 and the results are set out below.

**What is the outcome of your directorate's review of the policy?**

5. Each directorate has reviewed the Policy and some minor updating and clarification has been made as a result. Additionally, Section 7 of the Policy contains linkages to Safeguarding Children Procedures.

**Are you aware of any use of the Policy by your staff and, if so, please supply appropriate details?**

6. There has been some limited reported use of the Policy in the last 12 months. DACHs report one reference of using the policy during the year. This related to allegations of inappropriate management behaviour. The allegations were investigated and found not to be substantiated. The complainant was provided with details of the outcome which was accepted.  
Children's Services report two issues raised under the policy. However in both cases the individuals involved were only prepared to remain anonymous and while they found it helpful to raise and discuss their concerns they were not prepared to take the matters further.
7. As in previous years the Directorate of Finance received a few confidential letters, mostly anonymous, which were reviewed by Internal Audit.

**How are your staff reminded of the existence of the policy e.g. newsletters and briefings?**

8. Generally directorates make use of briefings, newsletters, management meetings, team briefings, posters and leaflets.

**Are there regular checks of posters and leaflets to make sure that they are up to date and readily available?**

9. All directorates report that regular (i.e. at least annually) checks do take place and any missing or out-dated posters are replaced.

**Finance**

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Law**

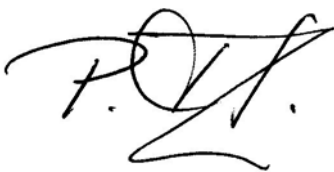
11. The relevant legislation is contained in the Public Interest Disclosure Act which affords some statutory protection for whistle-blowers.

**Equality Impact**

12. This report takes into account the Council's policy on equality and diversity.

**Recommendation**

13. It is recommended that the Committee note the outcome of the recent monitoring of the Confidential Reporting Policy.



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Monitoring Officer

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**List of Background Papers**

1. Various e-mails from Council directorates in 2009.