

PROCUREMENT

SUPPLIER WHISTLEBLOWING PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. The County Council is opposed to all forms of fraud, corruption and malpractice whether arising from within or outside the County Council or from contractors. If contractors or subcontractors have any concerns about suspected malpractice, the County Council encourages them to raise the issue. Managers of the County Council will take your concerns seriously and wish to encourage you to report any suspected fraud or corruption.
2. It is also open to you to raise appropriate concerns with relevant external agencies, such as the Health & Safety Executive, the Audit Commission and Utility Regulators.
3. This policy:
 - provides the basis on which suppliers can raise any such concerns they may have, and receive feedback on action taken;
 - allows contractors and suppliers to take matters further if they are dissatisfied with the County Council's response;
 - applies to contractors working for the County Council on County Council premises;
 - applies to suppliers and service providers under a contract with the County Council;
 - applies to people working in partnership with the County Council e.g. volunteers.

When to use the Procedure

4. This policy covers any concerns about:
 - conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law;
 - conduct you believe to be a significant breach of a contract with the County Council;
 - harassment;
 - racial, sexual, disability or other discrimination;
 - health and safety risks, including risks to the public and/or other employees;
 - damage to the environment;

- unauthorised use of public funds or other assets;
- possible fraud or corruption;
- neglect or abuse of clients;
- other unethical or improper conduct.

How to raise a concern

5. If you have a concern about suspected or potential malpractice, you should initially contact any of the officers listed below:

• Monitoring Officer – Pending	0116 305 6007	
• Director of Corporate Resources – Brian Roberts	0116 305 7830	brian.roberts@leics.gov.uk
• Chief Executive – John Sinnott	0116 305 6000	john.sinnott@leics.gov.uk

6. Once you have notified the County Council of your concern it will be looked into in order to assess initially what action should be taken. You will be notified who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether further assistance may be needed. A formal written response will then be issued to you summarising your concern and setting out how the County Council proposes to handle the matter. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so request. If you ask that your identity is protected by keeping your confidence, it will not be disclosed without your consent. At the appropriate time however you may need to come forward as a witness.

How the County Council will respond

7. Any concerns raised will always receive a response. This may entail either investigation by managers or internal audit. Following which, matters may be referred to an external agency such as external Audit or the police.
8. The County Council will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, this will be taken before any investigation is conducted. Within ten working days of a concern being raised, you will receive an acknowledgement in writing from the officer dealing with it as follows:
- acknowledging that the concern has been received;

- indicating how the County Council proposes to deal with the matter;
 - giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - telling you whether any initial inquiries have been made;
 - telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not why not.
9. The County Council will take steps to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern. The County Council accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, the County Council will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.
10. The County Council also has a whistleblowing procedure as part of its Employee Code of Conduct for use by employees of the County Council.