



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Overview and Audit Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	13 March 2019
<b>OFFICER</b>	Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Steven Lambert
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Updated Whistleblowing Procedure (V8.0)</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The aim of the Authority's Whistleblowing procedure is to encourage individuals who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Authority's work to not overlook these concerns, but raise these through a supportive network.</p> <p>This report presents the updated Whistleblowing procedure (Appendix 1), which has been reviewed in line with normal practice. The proposed amendment to the updated procedure is for clarification purposes around the Whistleblowing hotline service. This change is shown as additional text underlined (<u>underlined</u>) in section 11 of Appendix 11.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	It is recommended that the Committee approve for publication the updated Whistleblowing procedure as detailed in Appendix 1, noting the proposed additional wording in the updated document.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>The Whistleblowing procedure seeks to mitigate risk for the Authority and its employees/workers. A clear procedure for raising concerns helps to reduce the risk of serious concerns being mishandled, whether by the employee/worker or the Authority.</p> <p>Business ethics are increasingly seen as an issue that can contribute to building or destroying an organisation's reputation. The Whistleblowing procedure gives clear guidance to managers and employees/workers.</p> <p>If managers, employees/workers do not have directional guidance from fit for purpose procedures aligned to the corporate objectives, there is a risk of potential employment relations issues and a non-consistent management approach.</p> <p>On a three yearly or risk critical basis, the employment related procedures and guidance notes</p>

	are created and amended to support each employment related policy theme.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The Whistleblowing procedure allows employees/workers to use an external confidential Whistleblowing hotline service if they feel unable to raise a concern with an appropriate level of management. This service is provided via the Occupational Health provider and funded within the existing Occupational Health budget.
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>Part IVA of the Employment Rights Act (1996), inserted by the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998), provides a framework of protection against detriment or dismissal in connection with whistleblowing or illegal practice within the workplace.</p> <p>Encouraging a culture where concerns are reported at an early stage makes it easier for effective action to address those concerns and therefore avoid more serious regulatory breaches or reputational damage. An effective internal Whistleblowing procedure makes it less likely that an employee/workers disclosures to an external agency (particularly to the press) would be protected under whistleblowing legislation and assists the Authority to demonstrate that it has adequate measures in place to prevent corruption within the workplace.</p> <p>All procedures take due regard to appropriate legislation and best practice.</p>
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	The <a href="#">Policing and Crime Act 2017</a> requires the Authority to keep opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services under review. The Authority continues to collaborate with other Fire Authorities in the development of employment related policies and procedures where practicable. The current operational focus is on alignment of operational policy and procedures. The workforce reform focus is on operational recruitment and apprenticeships related processes and procedures.
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	There are no health and safety implications.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	The Integrated Impact Assessment/Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed as part of the update. There are no identified adverse impacts on any protected characteristics.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	<p><b>Contribution to delivery of corporate objective;</b></p> <p>The Whistleblowing procedure supports the overarching employment related policy themes and therefore compliant with the strategic direction of the Authority on employment related policy matters and supports delivery of the current corporate plan.</p>

	<p><b>Communication with stakeholders;</b> Stakeholder communication is a significant element of successful implementation of the employment related procedures.</p> <p>Following approval of the updated Whistleblowing procedure, this document will be communicated to employees in accordance with usual practice. This will be followed up as part of a suite of training and awareness sessions during 2019.</p> <p><b>Systems of Control;</b></p> <p>As part of the on-going review of the effectiveness and usage of this procedure, any concerns raised under the Whistleblowing procedure will be monitored and reported separately within the annual case management report. Although the Overview and Audit Committee will not review the procedure before 2022, it will monitor usage of the procedure when reported as part of the annual internal audit report.</p>
<p><b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Report to Overview and Audit held 15 July 2015 - Revised Whistleblowing procedure: <a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5514/5562/3337/ITEM_14_with_appendix.compressed.pdf">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5514/5562/3337/ITEM_14_with_appendix.compressed.pdf</a></p> <p>The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998): <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/23/contents">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/23/contents</a></p>
<p><b>APPENDICES</b></p>	<p>Appendix 1: Updated Whistleblowing Procedure (V8.0)</p>
<p><b>TIME REQUIRED</b></p>	<p>10 minutes.</p>
<p><b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b></p>	<p>Faye Mansfield; HR Development Manager <a href="mailto:fmansfield@bucksfire.gov.uk">fmansfield@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 01296 744623</p>