

Whistleblowing policy

Policy Statement

1. PHSO is committed to the highest possible standards of professional conduct, including openness, honesty and accountability. This policy provides a process through which PHSO employees can raise concerns about serious wrong-doing if those standards are not met. PHSO recognises that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.

Purpose and Scope of Policy

2. This policy covers PHSO employees, agency workers, contractors, consultants and those on secondment from other organisations.

3. This policy provides a process by which concerns about serious wrong-doing can be raised and allows PHSO to deal with these quickly and effectively.

4. This policy follows the approach in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and will assist PHSO to promote high standards of governance and accountability.

5. This policy is not intended to be used for matters that are covered by other PHSO policies, for example the Grievance Policy, Equality & Diversity Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy, which should be used by employees to raise concerns or complaints about their own employment.

Principles

6. The following principles apply:

- PHSO's core values are Excellence, Leadership, Integrity and Diversity. Our commitment to maintaining our integrity requires us to be open, honest and straightforward in all our dealings and to use time, money and resources effectively, so that:
 - we are consistent and transparent in our actions and decisions;
 - we take responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves accountable for all that we do;
 - we treat people fairly.
- PHSO will assume that all concerns raised under this policy are done in good faith. However, in the unlikely event that a concern is found to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious, action under the Disciplinary policy will be considered.
- employees who are responsible for any wrong-doing themselves and raise the issue under this policy will not be provided with immunity for the actual wrong-doing, although PHSO will take into account their raising of the matter.

- every effort will be made not to reveal an employee's identity if this is their wish. However, in certain circumstances, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.
- PHSO will make every attempt to ensure that the employee making the complaint is not victimised or suffers any detriment as a result of having complained.
- employees are not expected to prove, beyond reasonable doubt, the truth of an allegation. However, they do need to demonstrate that there are sufficient grounds for their concern.

Outcomes

7. The outcomes of this policy are that:

- employees have a clear understanding of how to raise concerns regarding professional standards;
- PHSO is able to comply with its obligations under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998;
- the integrity of PHSO is upheld and arrangements are in place for the proportionate and independent investigation of such matters and for appropriate follow-up action.

Monitoring and Review

8. This policy will be reviewed regularly and in line with relevant legislation.