



Don't turn a blind eye

What should you do if you suspect fraud or corruption?

Why whistleblowing can help you
How the Public Interest Disclosure Act protects you

Prepared by Audit Scotland and Public Concern at Work

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Prepared by Audit Scotland Providing assurance, promoting excellence
and Public Concern at Work Making whistleblowing work

This leaflet is written especially for people who work in:

- a local authority
- NHSScotland
- a department of the Scottish Executive
- a police or fire service
- a further education college
- an executive agency
- a non-departmental public body



Why you should read this leaflet

All public sector organisations are at risk of, or affected by, fraudulent or corrupt activity. If you work in a public body you have a key role to play in deterring and tackling such abuse, as this leaflet explains. Apart from costing all of us as taxpayers millions of pounds each year, the reasons you should not turn a blind eye to fraud and corruption are that it:

- demoralises you and your honest colleagues
- strengthens bullies and incompetents
- diverts precious resources from those who need it
- undermines public and political confidence in public services
- makes *your* job harder.



Fraud and Corruption

some Do's and Don'ts

Do

The **Public Interest Disclosure Act** provides strong protection for workers who blow the whistle on – or raise a genuine concern about – malpractice. The protection is most readily available when the whistle is blown internally. Your employer's whistleblowing policy will tell you how you can safely raise a concern. It should also explain the role your union can play.

If you haven't been told there's a whistleblowing policy or you're still not sure what to do, it's always perfectly safe to get legal advice. If you want, you can contact Public Concern at Work for free, confidential advice on **020 7404 6609** or at **helpline@pcaw.co.uk**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act also protects a range of external whistleblowing. As to fraud and corruption in Scotland's public sector, the Act recognises the important role of Audit Scotland and it sets out how you can safely contact it. The Act also provides a special disclosure route for workers in the NHS and other government-appointed public bodies.

If you want to know more about how the Act works and the rules on protection, ask your employer or your union or visit **Public Concern at Work's** website at **www.whistleblowing.org.uk**

- **do raise the matter**
The sooner the problem is raised and looked into, the sooner any wrongdoing can be stopped and the sooner you and others can be reassured things are in order.
- **do pass on any reasonable suspicion to someone in authority**
This is usually your manager or the internal audit service. Alternatively, you could contact the director of finance or the monitoring officer.
- **do remember key details**
If possible, make a note of key details, such as what caused your suspicion, when things happened and who was involved.

Don't

- **don't turn a blind eye**
If you are worried that some wrongdoing is happening at work, please don't keep it to yourself. Being wise after the event helps nobody.
- **don't investigate the matter**
You may make matters worse if you do. It's your job to raise the concern, not to prove it.
- **don't report your suspicions to someone who doesn't have proper authority**
There are special rules surrounding the gathering of evidence for use particularly in criminal cases. Attempts to gather evidence by people who are unfamiliar with these rules can inadvertently destroy the case.
- **don't delay**
As you won't be asked to prove your concern, raise it when it's a concern. Don't wait for proof.

Whistleblowing

Helpful hints

- **do check the whistleblowing policy**
Your organisation should have in place a well publicised policy telling you how you can safely raise a genuine concern inside and outside the body. The policy will tell you who you can talk to and you are advised to follow it.
- **do get advice**
If there's no whistleblowing policy or if you're still not sure how to raise your concern internally or outside, do get advice. **Public Concern at Work** can advise on how best you can raise your concern - contact their advisers on **020 7404 6609** or at helpline@pcaw.co.uk. Your union or lawyer should also be able to help.
- **do remember Audit Scotland**
As an independent authority, Audit Scotland can help make sure genuine concerns about fraud and corruption are properly investigated. To find out more about how it does this, you can contact **Audit Scotland** on **0131 477 1234** or visit its website at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk.



About us

AUDIT SCOTLAND

Audit Scotland is a statutory body which provides services to both the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission. Together they ensure that the Scottish Executive and the public sector bodies in Scotland are held to account for the proper, efficient and effective use of public funds.

PUBLIC CONCERN AT WORK

Public Concern at Work is the leading authority on whistleblowing. Established in 1993, it provides confidential advice to employees, employers and governments. For more information about the charity's work in Scotland, call its Glasgow office on **0141 883 6761**.

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