What is the Confidential Reporting Code ?

Have you heard of the term "whistleblowing"? Whistleblowing is about helping people have a voice to raise legitimate concerns or worries about an organisations activities and practices.

Lincolnshire County Council have adopted this Code to make it possible for anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the County Council to raise concerns they have and to be sure those issues will be taken seriously.

Generally, if you want to raise an issue, there are established channels i.e. through your own manager (if you work for the Council) or your normal point of contact if you are employed by one of the Council's suppliers, agents or partners. Sometimes that route can't be used:
- ✘ maybe you've raised an issue and not had a satisfactory response
- ✘ perhaps the normal contact is the very person you have concerns about

The Code provides another way to get that information to a point where it will be taken seriously.

What is it for?

The intention is to make it easy for you to be heard if normal channels can't be followed. The Council wants you to:
- ✓ feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- ✓ be reassured that the Council will do the utmost to protect you from reprisals, or victimisation for raising concerns in good faith
- ✓ be able to take the matter further if you are dissatisfied with the Council's response

What kind of areas are covered?

Examples of issues which might be raised, would include,
- conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
- sexual, physical or verbal abuse of clients, employees or the public
- health and safety risks to the public, clients and employees
- damage to the environment
- the unauthorised use of public funds
- possible fraud or corruption
- disclosures related to miscarriage of justice
- unethical conduct

Or it may be something that,
- makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards
- is against the Council's policies & procedures
- is unlawful
- amounts to improper conduct.

It is not intended to replace grievance or other established processes of the Council.

What happens if a concern is raised?

Concerns can be raised by phone, email or in writing (details are on the back page). This will start a confidential and independent examination process. The more information that can be supplied, including dates, times, details and names the greater the opportunity to establish the facts, but on no account should anyone try to investigate matters themselves. As far as practicable, your confidentiality will be respected, but obviously this cannot be guaranteed in all circumstances (e.g. if the matter is potentially a criminal offence, police may be involved and/or there are child protection issues)

How to raise concerns

If there is an issue that you cannot or do not feel able to take through your manager and if it falls within the areas described in this leaflet there are three ways to share that information.

- You can write to Lincolnshire County Council at the following address:

Lincolnshire County Council
PO Box 640
Lincoln
LN1 1WF

Mail delivered through this route will only be opened by the person responsible for taking action under the scheme. This is the Council's Head of Internal Audit who will ensure all matters are dealt with independently or confidentially.

- Send an email to Concern_Hot_Line@lincolnshire.gov.uk

- You can phone 0800-0853716
(staffed Mon-Fri 8:30-5:00 or ansaphone out of hours)

This is a dedicated, confidential freephone line. Staff will talk you through the issue to gather the necessary information. That information will then be forwarded to the officer indicated above.

You do not have to give a name or contact details, but failure to do so may prevent full and fair investigation and will make it difficult to ensure you are kept informed of progress and outcomes.

Whilst vexatious or malicious calls will not be tolerated and could result in disciplinary action, Lincolnshire County Council will seek to fully support any employee who raises genuine concerns.

Lincolnshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE