

Whistleblowing Policy

Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Buckinghamshire LEP) Whistleblowing policy

Buckinghamshire LEP aims to conduct its business and activities, along ethical and honest principles. We expect our employees to adhere to these standards; including by reporting any perceived wrongdoing by:

- the LEP itself;
- its Board members;
- work colleagues;
- business, contract or funding partners;
- organisations which have bid for or received LEP funding;
- organisations which have bid for or received Buckinghamshire LEP ESIF funding.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects workers who report wrongdoing within the workplace. It is the aim of this Buckinghamshire LEP policy to ensure that, as far as possible, our employees are able to tell us about wrongdoing at work which they believe has occurred or may be about to occur.

Buckinghamshire LEP appreciates the difficulty employees may feel in raising an issue of potential wrongdoing, involving the LEP itself or its activities. This policy aims to ensure they will feel confident in raising issues, that their concerns will be treated seriously and that no action will consequently be taken against them for raising such issues.

The procedure employees should use is set out below. This procedure should be used where an employee is concerned about any of the following:

- wrongdoing in the workplace, including suspected criminal offences;
- failure to meet legal obligations;
- miscarriages of justice;
- health and safety dangers;
- environmental risks;
- OR concealment of any of the above.

The employee should not feel they must prove allegations, only that they have a reasonable and honest belief that what they are reporting is the truth. It is possible an allegation received may prove to be unfounded but this should not deter employees from raising a genuine concern, which should be properly investigated.

Whistleblowing Procedure

Employees should use the following procedure:

- Where possible, in the first instance raise the matter of concern with their line manager.
- Where not possible – their line manager may be part of the employee's concern, or unavailable – then the following people may be approached within the Buckinghamshire LEP structure:
 - Chief Executive;
 - Chair of the Board; or
 - Buckinghamshire Council (our Accountable Body) HR Manager.

- If required, the concern will be further investigated. The employee will be told the outcome of the investigation and any resulting action, if any is needed.
- If the Buckinghamshire LEP employee remains unhappy with the speed, conduct or outcome of the investigation into the concern they've raised they can refer the matter to the LEP's "Accountable Body". Buckinghamshire Council.
- Again, the concern would then be further investigated and the employee informed of the result of this investigation.
 - A further option exists, which is to raise a concern with the Chief Executive of a neighbouring LEP, in this instance, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP. Its Chief Executive has agreed to document and investigate any reported concerns, meet with the person raising the concern and if appropriate inform the government's Cities and Local Growth Unit if it is felt that there is a case for further detailed investigation into the issue being raised.
- Buckinghamshire LEP undertakes that no employee making a report of their concerns, in good faith, will be subject to detrimental treatment as a result of their report. This is in accordance with Section 47B of the Employment Rights Act 1996:

'A worker has the right not to be subjected to any detriment by any act, or any deliberate failure to act, by his employer done on the ground that the worker has made a protected disclosure.'

Any employee who feels they are/have been subject to a detriment should inform the Buckinghamshire LEP Chief Executive or HR Manager immediately, so this can be addressed.

Employees found to have raised concerns not in good faith, or with malicious intent, or so as to falsely implicate a colleague or other person, will be dealt with under Buckinghamshire LEP disciplinary rules for misconduct.

There may be occasions when a concern raised by an employee has to be referred to another agency, internal or external: for example the police, financial conduct authorities or Buckinghamshire LEP's 'Accountable Body'. Buckinghamshire LEP reserves the right to make such references without the consent of the employee originally raising the concern.

The Policy

Responsibility for implementation and monitoring of this policy, including review and regular updates of it to keep pace with legislation, lies with the Buckinghamshire LEP Chief Executive.

Queries on or comments about this policy should be addressed in the first instance to: Richard Harrington, Chief Executive, Buckinghamshire LEP, West Wing, University Campus, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2GZ, Richard.harrington@BTVLEP.co.uk .