



## **PLA Whistleblowing Policy**

The Port of London Authority is committed to providing the highest standards of service and integrity to its clients and customers. This involves ensuring that our customers and the wider community can have full trust and confidence in the way the Port of London Authority manages its services and resources and that all those who use our services are dealt with safely, effectively and in accordance with best practice.

The Port of London Authority recognises its staff as its most valuable asset. They deliver and manage the services, develop the policies, listen to customers and ensure proper safeguards are in place to protect the interests of individual service users and the Port of London Authority's assets and resources.

The Port of London Authority is committed to staff training, supervision and support to ensure these high standards are maintained.

In line with best practice now adopted by many organisations, the PLA's Whistleblowing Policy has been put in place should you suspect that the organisation itself or a member of staff, customer, supplier or contractor are in any way acting illegally, accepting bribes, in breach of health and safety, negligent, involved in fraudulent activity or breach of policy, you have the right to report these issues.

Employees are protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act which provides strong protection to workers who raise genuine suspicions internally. It also protects disclosures to key regulators, such as the Health & Safety Executive and the Environment Agency where the worker has good evidence to support their concern.

Where there is valid reason to make a wider disclosure (for e.g. to the police) there is also protection provided the disclosure is reasonable.

If you are considering whether to make a wider disclosure it is sensible to seek the advice of your Union, lawyer or Public Concern at Work first.

### **Why is whistleblowing necessary?**

There may be occasions when high standards from employees, contractors, suppliers and customers are not maintained. Normally such problems are dealt with by reporting the matter to the manager responsible for that service who will investigate and rectify the issue.

However when an individual has concerns about serious malpractice in areas such as health and safety or fraudulent, discriminatory or dishonest practice, it can be difficult to know what to do.

The Port of London Authority has therefore introduced this procedure to enable you to raise your concerns with the assurance that a proper investigation takes place together with any appropriate action.

### **When to use the Whistleblowing Procedure**

We want you to voice your concerns at the earliest possible stage. The Whistleblowing Procedure should be used if you feel unable to raise your concern with either your Line or Senior Manager or HR department, or you are unhappy with his or her response. Equally it can be used if you suspect a colleague, senior manager, customer, contractor or even a supplier of malpractice or a criminal offence.

This procedure should not be confused with the Port of London Authority's Grievance Procedure, which should be used if you feel aggrieved about your own employment situation.

## How to proceed:

In the first instance, you should report the matter orally or in writing to your Line Manager, a Senior Manager or the HR Department within the Port of London Authority.

If you are unhappy with the response, or feel unable to speak to a member of the PLA highlighted above, then please contact Safecall free on **0800 915 1571**.

Safecall provide an independent confidential reporting line where you can raise your concerns and be assured they will be fully addressed. Calls are handled by skilled staff and will be treated in complete confidence. A report of the call will be sent to the Secretariat Department who will in turn forward this to an appropriate impartial officer within the organisation to be dealt with or followed up. Please be assured that both Safecall and the PLA Secretariat will not disclose your name should you wish to remain anonymous.

As well as the Freephone number, Safecall can be contacted via email [pla@safecall.co.uk](mailto:pla@safecall.co.uk) or via the web [www.safecall.co.uk/report](http://www.safecall.co.uk/report).

This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Details of the Safecall service can also be found on the posters which appear around the organisation on noticeboards and in restrooms.

In addition, free confidential advice is available from Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or [whistle@pcaw.org.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.org.uk). Public Concern at Work is an independent charity that also specialises in whistleblowing.

## Counselling

Confidential counselling is available to any employee in respect of these procedures and further details can be obtained from the PLA Human Resources Department.

## Action that will follow

It is the PLA's responsibility to follow up any issues that have been reported. The initial stage may be, if appropriate, to meet you and assess the steps that need to be taken.

The HR Department and / or ExCo will consider all matters and decide on the action that is necessary in respect of all concerns reported through Safecall. They may decide to appoint an appropriate officer to carry out a full investigation or a member of the Audit Committee.

Where there is evidence of malpractice or misconduct, appropriate action will be taken against the individual concerned which, in serious cases, may lead to dismissal.

A confidential record will always be maintained by Safecall and the PLA of any allegations made under these procedures so that, in future, any common patterns of concerns can be identified. In addition, a record of all calls will be presented in the form of a report to the Audit Committee on an annual basis.

## What you should not do

You must **not** use these procedures to pursue a personal grievance.

You must **not** use these procedures to deal with day to day problems, mistakes or general differences of view that arise at work.

You should **not** use this procedure unless you reasonably believe the concern is substantially true.

You should **not** as a first step take your concerns to the news media.

## **Working as a contractor or on third party premises**

If you have concerns whilst working as a contractor or at a third party workplace, you should either raise these with the third party concerned in accordance with their own procedures or alternatively use the Safecall confidential Freephone reporting line **0800 915 1571**.

## **Trade Unions**

This policy and procedure has been the subject of consultation with the Port of London Authority's trade unions who fully support them as a means of maintaining the highest standards and practice within the Port of London Authority's services.