

Policy and process on whistleblowing for Council, boards and committees

A member of Council or a Board or Committee may be the first person to realise that there may be something seriously wrong.

The RCN is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability and, in line with that commitment, we would encourage members who have a serious concern about the way the organisation is being run to come forward and voice those concerns.

This whistle-blowing policy and process is intended to cover concerns that relate to something that:

- is unlawful
- is against the RCN's financial and constitutional procedures and policies
- falls below established standards or practice or
- amounts to improper conduct.

How you raise your concerns will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and whether members or management are thought to be involved. You would normally raise your concerns within the RCN with the Chair of your Board/Committee; or your country/regional director. Alternatively you may feel it appropriate to contact the Chair of Council; the Chief Executive or the Chair of our Audit Committee.

They will advise you how the RCN can best support you through the process and for as long as you need it afterwards.

The RCN will do its best not to divulge your identity to anyone beyond those carrying out or directly involved in the investigation. However, it must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information without us revealing your identity directly and you may be required to give evidence as part of the investigation.

We will take every step to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern. If you make an allegation in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make malicious or vexatious allegations, appropriate action may be taken against you.

We would however urge members to identify themselves. This enables us to investigate the allegations in a more informed and effective way and means we can

inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation or explain why a matter is not being investigated.

Concerns expressed anonymously are often much more difficult to investigate but we will consider anonymous allegations, taking into account the seriousness of the issue raised; the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation for other attributable sources.

To raise a concern please email:

Chairofcouncil@rcn.org.uk

Approved by RCN Council 3 December 2015