

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE: 10 JULY 2024
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE
AUTHOR: STEPHEN HULSE

SUBJECT: WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose of Report

1. To secure approval of a new whistleblowing policy and procedure.
sentences.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members approve the Freedom to speak up (whistleblowing) policy and procedure.

Background

2. Members will recall that an internal audit report concerned with whistleblowing contained a number of recommendations, one of which was that a review and update to the existing whistleblowing policy and procedure was necessary. The recommendations is reproduced in Appendix 1 to this report.
3. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager has reviewed a number of policies and procedures and created a new document.

Information

4. The replacement policy and procedure concerned with whistleblowing is attached to this report as Appendix 2. Members will see that it is entitled 'Freedom to speak up (whistleblowing) policy and procedure'. Whilst it is primarily concerned with whistleblowing, it does provide a steer about the raising of concerns that do not meet the whistleblowing threshold. The Service wishes to encourage the raising of any concerns and primarily hopes that staff can do so internally. However, it acknowledges the importance of having an external option, such as Safecall.
5. The new policy and procedure make it clear that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager is very much front and centre in the handling of whistleblowing. However, such matters could be raised directly with other staff and not necessarily come to his attention. Therefore, it is important that other

managers are aware of the policy and procedure and when to engage with him; otherwise, there may be inconsistencies in how matters are handled and in the presentation of data.

Financial Implications

6. There is an annual charge for the Safecall reporting system and call handling. In 2023-24, this was £4,152.

Legal Implications

7. The policy and procedure seeks to ensure compliance with legislation and mitigate risks to the reputation of the Service and the Fire Authority.

Equality and Diversity Implications

8. The policy and procedure is intended to minimise the risk of reprisals against those raising concerns and allow concerns about discriminatory practices to be raised internally and dealt with appropriately without recourse to litigation.

Environmental Implications

9. There are no environmental implications.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**