

Whistleblowing hotline





Introduction

All businesses are aware that the true cost of unethical, illegal or fraudulent activity is more than just a number. As well as direct financial costs, indirect costs such as reputational harm and bad publicity, lost trade and business disruption, can have significant impact on your business.

It's better to be proactive rather than be reactive to such activity, so implementing effective measures to prevent wrongdoing from occurring and having proper plans in place to deal with incidents reduces risk. As part of our service we can offer businesses a whistleblowing hotline, which employees can call if they suspect a wrongdoing.

We also offer training and support to you and your employees to ensure that our service is as effective and beneficial as possible.

- The hotline is tailored to your needs, to enable your employees to make disclosures whilst being protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act.
- Calls can be answered at any time with the hotline being open 24/7. An online portal is available in addition or as an alternative to a hotline.
- We will ask the whistleblower a set list of questions to understand the issue, which we will agree with you in advance.
- We will then produce a report to enable you to make an internal decision whether a further investigation is required and whether the allegation is a fraud or other grievance or complaint.
- Where we find a matter is employment related, we bring in specialist employment lawyers to work with you as part of the team.

Benefits to you

- Employees feel less vulnerable if this type of service is provided by an external supplier. Many still feel exposed by reporting incidents internally so, an independent hotline is often welcomed and encourages reporting of misconduct.
- A 24/7 service means that you won't need to think about staffing issues, saving you both time and money in the long term.
- Legal advice and support provided by Trowers prevents the situation from escalating and can help with reputation management.
- A whistleblowing hotline fosters a greater culture of transparency and reinforces the standards, ethics and behaviour that staff are expected to adhere to.
- The implementation of a whistleblowing hotline can act as a defence for an organisation by evidencing that it has policies and procedures in place to prevent bribery under the Bribery Act 2010.
- By having a hotline in place, our team will already know and understand your business. We will, therefore, be able to deal with investigations more quickly and seamlessly engage other departments within Trowers, to support further investigations as necessary.



Our expertise

When we receive a report, we will assess the nature of the allegation, for example, whether it is a whistleblowing or other grievance or complaint. As well as assessing suspicions of fraud that may be reported, our full service covers any type of employment advice required including representation in relation to employment claims if necessary and how to avoid similar complaints in the future.

Where further investigation is required in relation to a fraud, the team draws on its extensive experience to minimise the impact of a fraud incident, gather evidence quickly and conduct an in depth investigation when issues come to light.

If misappropriated assets are suspected following completion of an investigation, we react efficiently and decisively, which can mean the difference between recovery and loss.

We work with clients from across different industry sectors, including government authorities and publicly funded bodies, corporate mid-market businesses, SMEs and entrepreneurs and charities.

Examples include:

- Setting up and managing a whistleblowing hotline for a FTSE 250 specialist financial provider. We prepared specific questions to ask each caller tailored to what we knew our client wanted. This involved preparing a report following each call received for our client to consider whether a further investigation was required.
- Working with a national train operating company to set up and manage a whistleblowing hotline to complement its existing whistleblowing policy. We managed all incoming calls on the hotline and prepared reports based on the questions answered by each caller. Such questions were tailored to their business.
- Investigating whistleblowing allegations for a national charity on various issues including bullying and harassment on areas of race.

“Trowers’ whistleblowing hotline was a great product for Paragon. The Fraud & Investigations team provided a bespoke service to ensure that the hotline, and specifically the questions asked of all callers, were relevant to our services. Once set up, the hotline was managed by Mark Kenkre and his team who were on hand to answer any calls. Trowers continuously monitored Paragon’s hotline and promptly answered any issues we encountered during its operation. The hotline’s independence was very important to us because we wanted to encourage our employees to report any issues.”

Kim Murray-Barton – Head of Financial Crime, Paragon

Practice in brief

- Over 150 partners with more than 900 people located across the UK, Middle East and Far East providing a full-service integrated offering to clients with local knowledge and expertise at its core.
- Nine offices located in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Birmingham, Dubai, Exeter, London, Malaysia, Manchester, Oman.
- Member of Interlaw, the 'Elite Global Law Firm network', with lawyers in more than 140 cities worldwide.

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