

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Meeting to be held on 18 December 2023

Updated Whistleblowing Policy

(Appendix 1 refers)

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Executive Summary

The Whistleblowing Policy has been updated to include reference to Safecall, an anonymous reporting line which allows for anonymous reporting of unethical conduct, fraud or illegal activities.

Recommendation

The Lancashire Combined Fire Authority agrees the amended Whistleblowing Policy.

Information

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services published a report on values and culture in Fire and Rescue Services in March 2023. This report recommended that Chief Fire Officers should make sure that their Service provides a confidential way for staff to raise concerns via their Whistleblowing processes by 1 October 2023. This recommendation was supplemented by the National Fire Chief Council's recommendations on values and culture.

In response to those recommendations the Service has established Safecall, with effect from August 2023. Safecall is an anonymous independent external reporting line where calls can be made or emails sent. All communications are treated confidentially by independent trained staff who will preserve the individual's anonymity if they so wish. If Safecall receives a report out of hours and they feel that this indicates a risk to life or other emergency they will contact the relevant Duty Group Manager.

The establishment and process of Safecall has resulted in a need to update the Whistleblowing Policy (attached at Appendix 1) to reflect the new arrangements.

Business risk

There are no business risks arising from this report.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

The Whistleblowing Policy does not have any sustainability or environmental impact.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The establishment of Safecall, within the Whistleblowing Policy, has a positive impact from an equalities perspective, as it gives individuals experiencing any form of harassment or discrimination another route by which they raise and report issues of concern.

Data Protection (GDPR)

The processing of data by Safecall will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of Data Protection.

HR implications

The establishment of Safecall could result in an increased number of concerns being fed into the Human Resources Team which require action or intervention. This will be kept under review.

Financial implications

The establishment of Safecall has cost £2,310 per annum and will be piloted for 12 months and then reviewed.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: N/A