



****Embargoed until 00:01 Monday 11th November 2013****

UK organisations merely paying lip service to whistleblowing

- 93% of respondents said they have formal whistleblowing arrangements in place
- But **1 in 3** think their whistleblowing arrangements are **not effective**
- **54%** said they **do not train key members of staff** designated to receive concerns
- **44% confuse personal complaints** with whistleblowing
- **1 in 10** say their arrangements are **not clearly endorsed** by senior management

The most comprehensive survey of UK businesses' whistleblowing policies since the spate of recent scandals has found that despite over 90% of companies adopting formal whistleblowing policies, 54% said they do not train key members of staff designated to receive concerns and nearly half of companies (44%) confuse personal complaints with whistleblowing.

The survey, conducted by the UK's leading authority on whistleblowing, Public Concern at Work and global professional services organisation EY, also found that one in three respondents believe their whistleblowing arrangements are not effective.

The survey asked senior staff from over 30 different sectors, including Central Government, Banking, Healthcare and Construction, about their company's individual whistleblowing policy, representing the most in-depth and comprehensive survey of this kind to date.

Cathy James, Chief Executive at Public Concern at Work, comments: "While it is encouraging that a large number of companies have formal whistleblowing policies in place, it is deeply worrying to see how these policies are being implemented and managed.

"There appears to be a box-ticking culture emerging, rubber stamping policies which are not effective and that do not provide advice and support to whistleblowers - this could lead to serious issues being unreported or ignored. Training for staff dealing with whistleblowing concerns, which can be extremely complicated and often sector specific, appears to be woefully inadequate."

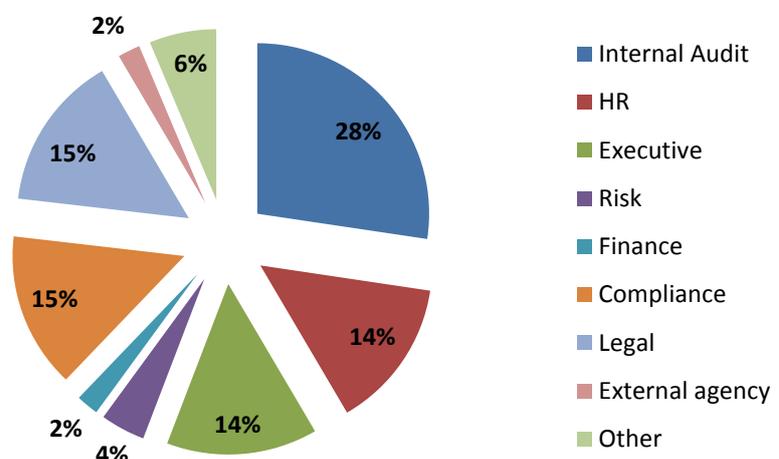
Other Whistleblowing Survey Highlights	
1 in 10	Do not include procedures on how to protect a whistleblower, which is the main reason why a worker might not speak up ⁱ
41%	Do not or do not know if their organisation provides feedback or progress updates to whistleblowers
Only 30%	Tell staff how they can approach a regulator –a necessary part of good practice
53%	Say their regulator does not review their arrangements

Regulators should be taking a lead on this as they are in an ideal position to have an overarching sector view of individual organisations’ whistleblowing policies. They should be playing a central role in overseeing and reviewing arrangements to ensure consistency, effectiveness and best practice.

Cathy James, continues: “What is most disappointing in this survey is the regulator involvement in reviewing whistleblowing arrangements. Regulators should be playing a pivotal role in ensuring arrangements in their sector are easy to understand, backed by top management and, above all, effective.”

The survey also highlights a lack of clarity over who is responsible for the day-to-day running of whistleblowing arrangements - with over nine different departments claiming responsibility.

Who has day-to-day responsibility for whistleblowing arrangements?





John Smart, EY Head of Fraud Investigation & Dispute Services, says: “Having an effective whistleblowing policy in place is crucial to any organisation’s attempt to tackle its fraud, or corruption risks. The reality is that many companies either do not fully understand their whistleblowing arrangements, or fail to have confidence in them.

“Despite so many high profile investigations over the past few years, many complaints are still ignored and those who blow the whistle on malpractice are marginalised. To be effective, it is essential that the whistle blowing arrangement is well-advertised and is trusted by those who may use it. Confidentiality and protection of the whistleblower are key aspects of trust, as is demonstrating that a complaint will be taken seriously. A key feature is the need for adequately resourced and suitably experienced personnel being responsible for the triaging of reports.”

Cathy James concludes: “Recent scandals in many sectors, including banking, healthcare, construction and even in the media, might have been prevented if it had been easier and safer to speak up and whistleblowers had been listened to. It is time for companies and the regulators alike to take the problem seriously.”

Public Concern at Work has established a Whistleblowing Commission of [experts and whistleblowers](#) which is examining regulators, attitudes to whistleblowing policy, law and policy and rewards. The Commission Report is being launched on 27th November and will be attended by leading policy makers. For further information on the event or to receive an embargoed copy of the report and press release please refer to the details below.

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**About the survey:**

The survey was conducted in October 2013 and interviewed over 164 senior members of staff in charge of whistleblowing policy across 30 different sectors. These organisations ranged from less than 500 employees to over 50,000 employees and were based in the UK. The survey was conducted in association with EY for Public Concern at Work.

About Public Concern at Work:

Public Concern at Work, the whistleblowing charity, aims to protect society by encouraging workplace whistleblowing. We operate a free, confidential advice line for workers with whistleblowing dilemmas, support organisations with their whistleblowing arrangements, inform public policy and campaign for legislative reform.

About EY's Fraud Investigation & Dispute Services

Dealing with complex issues of fraud, regulatory compliance and business disputes can detract from efforts to succeed. Better management of fraud risk and compliance exposure is a critical business priority – no matter what the industry sector is.

Our more-than-2,000 fraud investigation and dispute professionals around the world bring the analytical and technical skills needed to quickly and effectively conduct financial and other investigations and gather and analyse electronic evidence. Working closely with you and your legal advisors, we assemble the right multidisciplinary and culturally aligned team, and bring an objective approach and fresh perspective to these challenging situations, wherever you are in the world.

And because we understand that you need a tailored service as much as consistent methodologies, we work to give you the benefit of our broad sector experience, our deep subject matter knowledge and the latest insights from our work worldwide.



ⁱ 22% would not raise a concern through fear of reprisal - according a YouGov survey conducted on behalf of Public Concern at Work in June 2013.