

Post-session handout for Confidential Contacts

Case Study – An INWO monitored referral

Part one

You receive a letter from an INWO Complaints Reviewer about a monitored referral. The letter provides the name and contact details of a whistleblower who contacted the INWO to raise a concern about the manipulation of cancer waiting times data. The INWO have advised the whistleblower to raise the concern with the Board first but because the whistleblower has serious misgivings about confidentiality and requires support, the INWO have agreed to refer it on to you directly. The letter asks you to take the following steps:

1. Contact the whistleblower to outline the initial steps of the Board's whistleblowing procedure;
2. Discuss the whistleblowing concerns in more detail;
3. Outline who else will need to know their identity in order to progress the concerns;
4. Discuss what support arrangements might be needed;
5. Confirm that the whistleblower wants to proceed under the procedure within the Standards; and (if so)
6. Pass on the concern to the appropriate person in the Board

The letter tells you that the INWO have informed the Board's Liaison Officer that a whistleblower has been referred to you and to anticipate a new concern. They have not shared the name of the whistleblower with the Liaison Officer.

Part two

You acknowledge the letter from the INWO and let them know that you will contact the whistleblower.

You email the whistleblower and they ask to have a telephone call with them the next day to discuss the concerns and support options. You discuss the concerns in more detail and the whistleblower tells you:

- they work as a hospital administrator in a team of ten people. There has been a significant staff turnover in the last 12 months



- they have recently been off work with stress due to disagreements with their team leader, they are back at work but there are ongoing tensions, which is why they cannot raise concerns with them
- a new process for monitoring cancer waiting times was introduced six months ago and a new supervisor was brought in to oversee the scheme
- since returning to work, they have become increasingly concerned that data they had been working with had been changed incorrectly. They suspect that the supervisor had been changing the record to ensure the Board meet the national standards
- they have concerns about raising the issue and the potential impact on their mental health, given their recent absence. However, having spoken to the INWO they feel it is right to raise the concerns and want to access the Standards. They ask you for support through the process.

The person is very worried about confidentiality and you reassure them that only those who they agree can know their identity will be made aware of it. You explain that you are not involved in the investigation of the complaint but you can help to raise the concern with the Whistleblowing Lead. You explain that you would like to share the whistleblower's name with the Whistleblowing Lead in order to submit the concern but that their requests for confidentiality will be made very clear.

You discuss who might need to know the identity of the whistleblower and explain that as a starting point, the Whistleblowing Lead (who coordinates the Board's response) and the investigator are likely to need to know. You explain that if anyone else needed to be made aware, this would be discussed with the whistleblower in advance so that they could give consent and raise any concerns if they had them.

Part three

You discuss what support would be helpful for the whistleblower and offer to attend any meetings they might be asked to. You also agree to have check-ins with the whistleblower during the investigation process, to give them an opportunity to talk about how things are going with someone who is aware of the concerns raised. You signpost the whistleblower to details of the counselling services available from the Board, so that they can consider them.

You ask the whistleblower if they are prepared to follow up with an email, outlining the main points of their concern and they are happy to do that. They also give you



their consent to share their name with the Whistleblowing Lead in order to access the Standards but ask if they can communicate through you to begin with.

You refer the concern on to the Whistleblowing Lead, explaining that it has come as a monitored referral from the INWO, that the person has only agreed to the WL knowing their identity at this stage and that you will be supporting the whistleblower during any meetings but they may need additional support if that can be explored. You confirm to the whistleblower that the concern has been submitted and they receive an acknowledgement from the Whistleblowing Lead.

Takeaway points

- You may be contacted directly by the INWO if they make a monitored referral to the Board. Both you and the INWO's Liaison Officer at the Board will be contacted. The letter will tell you what to do.
- If you are unsure about what is expected or you need advice you can always contact your Whistleblowing Lead or the INWO advice line on 0800 008 6112.
- Confidential Contacts can support a whistleblower throughout the investigation process. There are a range of ways that this could be done and it is important to discuss this with the whistleblower. Examples to consider include regular 'check in' meetings, or accompanying the whistleblower to meetings during the investigation.
- Confidential Contacts should familiarise themselves with the support options already available in the Board so that they are prepared to signpost. This could include counselling services, occupational health services, chaplaincy, trade unions etc. If you are unsure – ask the Whistleblowing Lead or the HR department.
- A whistleblower may be concerned about who needs to know their identity during the investigation process. As a starting point, the Whistleblowing Lead (who you refer the concern to) and the Investigating Officer will likely need to know. The Board must check with the whistleblower before sharing their identity with anyone.
- You can always refer to the National Whistleblowing Standards for information on what the whistleblower should expect to happen during [the whistleblowing process](#). You can also find the information you need to discuss things like [support and protection under the Standards](#), and [confidentiality](#).



Further information

- The [National Whistleblowing Standards](#)
- [Independent National Whistleblowing Officer FAQs for whistleblowers](#)
- [Independent National Whistleblowing Officer contact details](#)