



Taking action on integrity issues

A guide for senior public sector staff for dealing with concerns raised by staff and members of the public.

Strong ethical leadership and integrity systems are needed to support consistent ethical conduct by public employees. Encouraging public sector employees to raise integrity issues as soon as they occur increases the likelihood of prompt resolution, without the need to escalate matters to external agencies.

Integrity in public organisations can be built by:

- **Establishing and communicating ethical standards**
Communicating clear organisational values and expectations of ethical conduct;
- **Integration and monitoring of ethical conduct**
Integration of values and ethical conduct into workplace practices, with regular monitoring such as audits, surveys and analysis of grievances and complaints, allows issues to be addressed promptly; and
- **Taking action on integrity issues**
Providing effective avenues for issues to be raised and for taking appropriate action.

Practical tips for dealing with concerns

- Respond to issues promptly — do not ignore them.
- Be clear about the issue/s raised.
- Use the information in this brochure to decide on the most appropriate avenue to deal with the matter.
- Be clear about which process will be used to explore the issue/s (When in doubt, check with your agency's relevant internal policies/procedures or with relevant external agencies as outlined in the tables in this brochure).
- Ensure your documentation is clear.
- Be clear about requirements to keep information confidential (When in doubt, check with your agency's relevant internal policies/procedures or with relevant external agencies).
- Ensure you adhere to requirements of procedural fairness (When in doubt, seek expert assistance or contact relevant external agency for advice).
- Ensure you act within your agency's legislative powers.
- Be alert to your agency's responsibility to notify the Corruption and Crime Commission of any suspected misconduct as soon as you become aware.

Where to refer concerns raised by staff members

Concern	Initial internal contact	Other internal options	Workplace mechanism	External options
General principles of official conduct, improper conduct, misconduct or criminal matters	Line manager or director	Grievance officer and/or Internal auditor In the event the above is inappropriate, contact agency Public Interest Disclosure (PID) officer	Agency Code of Conduct WA Code of Ethics In the event the above is inappropriate, contact agency PID officer	Corruption and Crime Commission (CCC) Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner (OPSSC) Office of the Auditor General (OAG) Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) WA Police Western Australian Ombudsman
Workplace conflicts or grievances (e.g. bullying or harassment)	Line manager or director	Grievance officer	Grievance process	Department of Consumer and Employment Protection (DOCEP) - Worksafe
Human resource (HR) management issues (e.g. employment conditions)	Line manager	Grievance officer or Corporate services	Awards and Agreements	External options may vary depending on the condition in dispute
HR management issues (e.g. HR standards ¹)	Line manager	Grievance officer	HR policies Grievance process	OPSSC
Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) concerns (e.g. racial /sexual harassment or discrimination)	Line manager or director	Equal Opportunity (EO) grievance officer	EO and harassment grievance process	EOC
Occupational Safety and Health issues	Line manager or director	Occupational Safety and Health Officer and/or representative	Occupational Safety and Health policies	DOCEP (WorkSafe)
Fair and reasonable decision making	Line manager or director	Internal auditor	Internal audit processes	Western Australian Ombudsman
Misconduct, corruption or fraud	Line manager or director	PID officer	Internal audit processes PID procedures	CCC WA Police
Serious and substantial waste or misuse of resources	Line manager or director	PID officer	Internal audit processes PID procedures	CCC OAG
Victimisation as a result of making an allegation	Line manager or director	Grievance officer	Grievance process or PID procedures (if original matter was a PID)	CCC EOC (sexual or racial harassment)

¹ Please note that issues associated with these concerns may give rise to disciplinary processes under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*. For guidance on this, please refer to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Public Sector Management Division) Disciplinary Procedures Guide, available at www.dpc.wa.gov.au/psmd

Where to refer concerns raised by customers or members of the public

Concern	Initial internal contact	Other internal options	Workplace mechanism	External options ²
Matters of official conduct, improper conduct, misconduct or criminal matters	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer PID officer	Agency complaints procedures PID officer	CCC OPSSC WA Police
Quality of/or access to goods or services	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer	Complaints management process	DOCEP (Consumer Protection)
EOC concerns (e.g. harassment or discrimination)	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer	Complaints management process	EOC
Process and procedure issues	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer	Complaints management process	Western Australian Ombudsman
Misconduct, corruption or fraud	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer	Internal audit processes In the event the above is inappropriate, contact agency PID officer	CCC WA Police
Serious and substantial waste or misuse of resources	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer PID officer	Internal audit processes PID procedures	CCC OAG
Victimisation as a result of making an allegation	Service delivery area or agency contact	Complaints officer	Complaints management process or PID procedures (if the original matter was a PID)	CCC (If allegation was made to CCC) Western Australian Ombudsman

Involvement of external agencies

Independent external agencies may be involved in some integrity issues if:

- A person refers an issue directly to an external agency**
 These may be a systemic or public interest issue, such as a public interest disclosure or an individual complaint or grievance, such as an equal opportunity matter or a complaint to the Western Australian Ombudsman;
- A legal obligation requires referral to an external agency**
 There may be a legal obligation to refer matters directly to agencies such as the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner. There is a legal obligation to notify the Corruption and Crime Commission of any suspected misconduct even if it is being dealt with; and
- An external agency carries out an audit, review or inquiry as part of their monitoring functions**
 Audits, performance examinations or investigations may be carried out by the Auditor General, and compliance with ethical and official conduct codes and public sector standards in human resource management may be monitored by the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner. In addition, where the Corruption and Crime Commission has referred a matter to an agency, it directly monitors how the agency conducts the investigation and will hold the agency responsible for properly looking into the matter. The Ombudsman may initiate and conduct own motion investigations into matters of administration.

² There are a number of other external bodies with which complaints about individual or systemic concerns can be lodged. These include the Office of Health Review, the Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Parliamentary Inspector for the CCC and the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services. You can ask the agency with which you have the complaint to advise you of the appropriate external body to refer your concerns to.

Processes used by ICG member bodies in taking action on integrity issues

	Auditing, reviews and inquiries	Investigations
Office of the Auditor General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual audits Performance examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public interest disclosures Investigations into mismanagement or waste of public resources
Office of the Public Sector Standards Commissioner	Monitoring compliance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official conduct and HR principles and standards; WA Code of Ethics and agency codes of conduct <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003</i> 	Investigations into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official conduct matters Claims of a breach of HR standards Claims of a breach of the WA Code of Ethics or agency code of conduct Public interest disclosures
Corruption and Crime Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor agency investigations Monitor the way in which independent agencies and authorities take action on allegations Provide assistance in monitoring and addressing misconduct risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations into misconduct
Western Australian Ombudsman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own motion investigations into matters of administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations into complaints about administrative actions and public interest disclosures

Note: The OAG does not cover local governments. The OPSSC does not cover local governments and public universities for official conduct and human resource standards; however, these agencies are covered for public interest disclosures.

This guide has been developed as a joint project of The Integrity Coordinating Group. Further details on the roles of ICG member bodies, the information in this guide and other resources are available on the ICG website (www.opssc.wa.gov.au/icg) or on member bodies' websites.

Disclaimer

This information does not constitute legal advice and the ICG accepts no liability for the accuracy of the information or for any act or omission done in reliance on the information provided, or for any consequences, whether direct or indirect, of any such act or omission.

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Address:	12th Floor 44 St Georges Tce Perth	4th Floor 2 Havelock Street West Perth WA 6005	12th Floor 44 St Georges Tce Perth	186 St Georges Tce Perth
Mail:	GPO Box 2581 Perth WA 6001		PO Box Z5386 St Georges Tce Perth WA 6831	PO Box 7667 Cloisters Square Perth WA 6850
Tel:	(08) 9260 6600 or	(08) 9222 7500	(08) 9220 7555 or	(08) 9215 4888 or
Freecall:	1800 676 607		1800 117 000 (outside metropolitan area)	1800 809 000
Fax:	(08) 9260 6611	(08) 9322 5664	(08) 9325 1107	(08) 9215 4884
Email:	pscc@opssc.wa.gov.au	info@audit.wa.gov.au	mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au	info@ccc.wa.gov.au
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