**SCOTLAND OFFICE AND OFFICE OF THE ADVOCATE GENERAL WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

The purpose of this notice is to inform all staff in the Scotland Office and in the Office of the Advocate General (OAG), as well as any external contractors working for the Scotland Office and OAG, about the department’s whistleblowing policy.

If you have serious concerns about any of the matters listed below it is important that you report them:

* Instances where you believe you are being asked to act in a way that conflicts with the Civil Service Code; (<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/values/cscode/index.aspx>)
* Evidence of criminal or unlawful activities by others;
* Evidence of financial impropriety; and
* Security breaches, including information security breaches.

In the first instance, you should speak to your line manager or countersigning manager. In the case of fraud or corruption (or suspected fraud or corruption) you may also contact Internal Audit at the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA):

 <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-internal-audit-agency/about#who-we-are>

The GIAA helps to ensure that Government, and the wider public sector, provides services effectively. The GIAA is an executive agency sponsored by HMT. Auditors would investigate any suspected instances of fraud on behalf of the Scotland Office and OAG.

If, for any reason, you do not think it appropriate to speak to any of these persons you should follow the MoJ whistleblowing procedures (even if you are not on secondment from MoJ). These procedures are compatible with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which provides protection to persons disclosing information in certain circumstances.

The MoJ whistleblowing policy can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

This document provides a full and clear account of whistleblowing procedures. (The Scottish Government procedures are very similar and provide equal protection to officials but should not be followed in relation to Scotland Office and OAG business.)

The policy allows you to raise your concerns confidentially with a Nominated Officer for whistleblowing in both the Scotland Office or OAG who is able to investigate your concerns or provide you with advice on what to do.

You can contact the Scotland Office and OAG’s Nominated Whistleblowing Officers by emailing them at the following mailbox. These mailboxes are monitored by the nominated officers only and your emails will only by seen by the nominated officer, or a deputy in cases of absence, so correspondence will remain confidential.

whistleblowing@advocategeneral.gov.uk

whistleblowing@ukgovscotland.gov.uk

You may also speak to a member of the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee is comprised of independent members whose function is to give advice to the Principal Accounting Officer about the proper running of the Scotland Office and OAG. The Audit Committee can institute routine checks of such matters as GPC transactions, T&S claims and other expenditure authorised personally by members of the Senior Civil Service. The commissioning of such checks by the Audit Committee should enable a complaint to be investigated without it being apparent to others that a complaint has been made. The three current members of the Audit Committee may be contacted in writing at the following address:

The Chair of the Scotland Office and Office of the Advocate General Audit Committee

Queen Elizabeth House

Edinburgh

EH8 8FT

If you believe that your concern has not been investigated adequately you may submit your concerns in writing to the one of the heads of the other Territorial Offices:

Wales Office: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/wales-office>

Northern Ireland Office: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/northern-ireland-office>

If having done so you believe you have not received a reasonable response, and your concern relates to a breach of the Civil Service Code, you may refer the matter in writing to the Civil Service Commissioners:
info@csc.gov.uk

If you would like to raise your concerns with an external and independent body, you can find a full list of Prescribed Persons on the BEIS Department website:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies).

The role of a Prescribed Person is to provide workers with a mechanism to make a public interest disclosure to an independent body. Further guidance on the role of a Prescribed Person can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-guidance-for-prescribed-persons>

These procedures are designed to give all officials and external contractors working for the Scotland Office and OAG a mechanism for raising concerns, and to preclude the need to do so externally.

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