



**Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham, Executive Director - Resources**

Report to:	<b>Audit Committee</b>
Date:	<b>16 November 2020</b>
Subject:	<b>Annual Whistleblowing Report</b>

**Summary:**

This report gives an overview of the Council's whistleblowing arrangements throughout the year 2019/20.

**Recommendation(s):**

Items to note:

- a) whistleblowing activity for 2019/20.
- b) ongoing work to raise awareness and provide assurance on the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for whistleblowing.

**Background**

1. This report provides a summary and analysis of whistleblowing disclosures received by the Council during the period from April 2019 to March 2020. Details reported include:

- Whistleblowing activity (and analysis of issues reported)
- Disclosures made (analysed by type and Council director area) – to identify any trends emerging and to compare with activity from previous years
- Resolution and outcomes from whistleblowing disclosures

**Conclusion**

2. The number of whistleblowing concerns (42) raised around Lincolnshire County Council activity in 2019/20 represents an increase on the previous year. The most prevalent areas of referrals made - financial (potential fraud) and policy breaches remained consistent although a small rise in safeguarding contacts was noted. Activity across all types of referral will continue to be monitored.

3. The proportion of concerns reported relating to Schools and Children's Services remains high (44% of calls). This continues an expected pattern identified over several years. We continue to work closely with management in that director area to proactively manage and address the issues that emerge.
4. The continued high level of disclosures made through the reporting line provides assurance that the Council's arrangements remain effective and that whistleblowers make disclosures to us knowing they will be dealt with fully, professionally and with sensitivity where required. We are encouraged that 66% of callers in 2019/20 waived their right to remain anonymous – this was a significant increase on previous periods. The level of activity (both for the Council and neighbouring councils) within Lincolnshire provides evidence that we are effective in encouraging whistleblowing and that supporting arrangements in place are operating well.
5. We have also continued to promote awareness of the Council's Whistleblowing arrangements. In a period of uncertainty and fundamental change in working arrangements created by the Covid19 outbreak, we felt it was key to ensure stakeholders know how to report any issues and concerns that they may hold.

## Consultation

### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Risk and Impact analysis completed

## Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Whistleblowing Annual Report 2019/20

## Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Lucy Pledge, who can be contacted on 01522 553692 or [lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk) .



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