



## Whistleblowing Procedure

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This procedure implements Hanover's policy on Whistleblowing and how it applies to the following persons:

- agency workers doing work for Hanover,
- trainees placed in Hanover,
- certain self-employed persons,
- those closely under Hanover's supervision
- Board Members

### 2. Responsibilities of those involved

2.1 **Managers** are responsible for:

- Promptly resolving concerns of any type,
- Listening to employee concerns and advising employees on the procedure for Whistleblowing,
- Creating a team culture of openness and trust,
- Ensuring that whistleblowing concerns are notified at once to a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT),
- Ensuring the whistle blower does not suffer a detriment, bullying or harassment (i.e. victimisation of any type) from other employees or Hanover, and promptly reporting any case where the whistle blower suffers these actions in accordance with our Dignity at Work framework.

2.2 **Employees** are responsible for:

- Raising their concerns appropriately in line with this procedure.

2.3 The **People Team**, supported by the Head of Governance & Transformation, is responsible for:

- Ensuring this procedure is followed,
- Advising managers and employees on this procedure,
- Supporting a workplace environment enabling whistleblowing to take place,
- Ensuring the employee does not suffer a detriment in terms of dignity at work, preventing victimisation from other employees, or Hanover,
- Investigating or supporting investigations related to whistleblowing,
- Ensuring that each case is managed promptly, to a timetable suited to the case concerned, with progress being notified regularly to all parties.

**2.4 The Chief Executive and Directors** are responsible for:

- Creating a workplace environment where whistleblowing can occur without fear of victimisation or harm to dignity at work,
- The implementation of the policy and procedure,
- Ensuring the action plan applied to the resolution of whistleblowing is completed and has been dealt with to a satisfactory standard.

**2.5 The Board, supported by the Audit, Performance & Risk Committee**, in line with the Scheme of Delegation is responsible for:

- Ensuring Hanover deals with whistleblowing in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

### **3. Internal Whistleblowing**

3.1 An employee should, in the first instance, raise their concern with their manager.

3.2 If it is inappropriate to raise the issue with their manager e.g. their concern is sufficiently serious or involves their manager, the employee should raise their concern with their manager's manager or speak directly to the Director of their team or any other Director. They may also contact the Head of People.

3.3 If the employee believes that step 3.2 is inappropriate they should speak directly to the Chief Executive.

3.4 If the employee believes that step 3.3. is inappropriate they should contact Hanover's Chair of the Board.

3.5 Where possible, the employee's identity will be kept confidential although it may not be possible to do so, depending on all circumstances.

3.6 The relevant Director, Head of Governance & Transformation and Head of People will discuss the concern and whether it meets whistleblowing criteria.

3.7 If the concern/s do meet the above criteria the Head of Governance & Transformation will be responsible for notifying the Chief Executive / ELT and ensuring the issue is reported initially to the Board. The Head of Governance & Transformation will be responsible for logging this on the Whistleblowing Register, and for maintaining a full record of all documentation and audit trail in the whistleblowing file.

3.8 The Head of Governance & Transformation will co-ordinate a Notifiable Event, in line with our Notifiable Events Procedure, to be sent to SHR, outlining the whistleblowing instance raised.

3.9 The Director, with the support of the Head of Governance & Transformation and the Head of People, will arrange the investigation, and will be responsible for contact with the employee during its course and afterwards as necessary. The Head of Governance & Transformation will confirm with the Chief Executive and Chair of the Board, whether a member of the Board will be appointed to support the investigation. Where necessary, in order to ensure no conflict of interest, the Board may decide to appoint an independent investigator.

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- 3.10 The investigation will apply all related good practice and conclude with a report and recommendations to the Audit Performance & Risk Committee, and where necessary may be reported to the Board. If the instance reported is connected to fraudulent activity, the investigation must also be carried out in line with the Anti-Fraud Framework, part of the Financial Control Framework.
- 3.11 Following the final report, the Director responsible will meet the whistle blower (who may be accompanied by a colleague, union representative or employee representative) to report the conclusions of the investigation. The conclusions will be confirmed in writing.
- 3.12 At this stage the Director may, in relation to the nature of the concerns, invoke the disciplinary procedure and other measures, including notification to internal auditors, external auditors, regulators and other bodies such as the Police, as necessary to protect Hanover.
- 3.13 The whistle blower will be asked to state, and confirm in writing, whether they consider the matter resolved.
- 3.14 If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the whistleblower, the Director with advice from the Head of People, may decide to investigate further or seek external advice.
- 3.15 The whistle blower also reserves the statutory right to report their concerns to a regulatory body or ombudsman and make a protected disclosure.
- 3.16 If the whistle blower considers the matter resolved they will be asked to confirm this in writing to the Director. The matter will then be considered closed. The Head of Governance & Transformation will then ensure that all documentation is recorded and that the SHR is updated as per the Notifiable Event Procedure.

### **4. External Whistleblowing – A Prescribed Person**

- 4.1 If an employee or Board Member feels unable to use Hanover's internal 'whistleblowing' procedure, they may disclose their concern to a 'prescribed person'.
- 4.2 A 'prescribed person' refers to regulatory bodies; e.g. the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) in respect of health and safety issues, or Scottish Housing Regulator in respect of housing matters.
- 4.3 An employee's or Board Member's disclosure to a 'prescribed person' will be protected provided they:
- make it in good faith;
  - reasonably believe that the information they have disclosed is substantially true;
  - reasonably believe that they are disclosing the concern to the right person.

### **5. External Whistleblowing – External Disclosure to Other Persons**

- 5.1 If an employee or Board Member makes a disclosure to someone external to Hanover who is not a 'prescribed person' they will only be protected if they:

- make the disclosure in good faith;
- reasonably believe that the information is substantially true;
- do not act for personal gain;
- act reasonably taking into account the circumstances.

5.2 To make a protected disclosure to others the employee or Board Member must either:

- reasonably believe Hanover would treat them unfairly if they made the disclosure to them or a prescribed person;
- reasonably believe that their disclosure to Hanover would result in the destruction or concealment of information about the wrongdoing; or
- have previously disclosed the same or very similar information to Hanover or a prescribed person.

### **6. External Whistleblowing – Exceptional Failure**

6.1 If an employee or Board Member believes they are blowing the whistle on an exceptionally serious failure in the workplace they do not need to go through the normal channels and can publicly blow the whistle straight away.

6.2 It is not enough for something to be an exceptionally serious failure in their opinion alone (e.g. if they do not agree with a working practice). It must be a matter of fact that something is a genuinely serious failure. An example could be an exceptionally serious health and safety risk that is putting workers' lives at risk.

6.3 The conditions given for blowing the whistle to others will only apply, if they:

- make the disclosure in good faith;
- reasonably believe that the information is substantially true;
- do not act for personal gain;
- act reasonably taking into account the circumstances.

6.4 Whether or not the employee or Board Member uses Hanover's Whistleblowing Helpline, deciding whether or not to make a public interest disclosure is a serious matter.

### **7. Where to get help if an employee is still uncertain?**

7.1 If an employee or Board Member is unsure about what to do / whether or not their proposed whistleblowing is protected, they should first seek professional advice.

7.2 Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work) is an independent charitable organisation which provides free, confidential advice to people concerned about malpractice and wrongdoing at work: [www.protect-advice.org.uk](http://www.protect-advice.org.uk)

### **Support for anyone involved in a Whistleblowing Disclosure and Investigation**

- 7.3 It is recognised, however, that all those involved in a 'whistleblowing' issue may experience different emotional, physical or psychological reactions to their experiences. Hanover provides a free and confidential counselling service through the Employee Assistance Programme. Further information can be sought by referring to the Wellbeing HAPI page. They should state to the person receiving the call that they are employed by Hanover.

### **8. Dignity at Work**

- 8.1 This procedure operates in strict accordance with our Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure. Should any employee raising a whistleblowing concern or anyone involved in a whistleblowing issue feel they are being subjected to bullying, harassment, victimisation, or other unacceptable behaviour then they should refer to the guidelines as set out within Hanover's Dignity at Work framework.
- 8.2 The Dignity at Work framework recognises that employees should first seek informal resolution and discuss this with their manager, if this feels appropriate to do so. Alternatively, the employee may wish to discuss the matter with any of the persons outlined in Section 3 of this Whistleblowing Procedure.
- 8.3 There may be circumstances where mediation or facilitation can help to resolve the matter and an appropriate manager will be involved in assessing whether this would be appropriate within a whistleblowing context.
- 8.4 However, there being more serious incidences where employees need to consider formal action. In these circumstances, a formal Dignity at Work concern can be raised through Hanover's Grievance Procedure. The employee is encouraged to disclose whether this relates to a whistleblowing concern to provide context and to enable the appointed investigator to ensure that both grievance and whistleblowing proceedings operate appropriately and fairly.

### **9. Review**

- 9.1 This procedure will be reviewed every three years or earlier if required.

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<b>Department</b>	Business Support and Transformation – HR&OD
<b>Author</b>	Director of Business Support & Transformation
<b>First Approved</b>	11 August 2022
<b>Approved By</b>	Head of People
<b>Most recent Review</b>	24/3/2025
<b>Approved By</b>	Head of People
<b>Next Review Due</b>	01/04/2028

### Revision History

<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Revision Date</u>	<u>Approval Date</u>	<u>Approved by</u>	<u>Review Reason</u>
1		11/8/2022	Head of People	
2	24/3/2025	24/3/2025		Minor update
3				
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