

Support for whistleblowers

If you are a NSW public official, there is support available when you speak up and report serious wrongdoing in the NSW public sector.

Independent support from the NSW Ombudsman

Before or after you speak up, you can contact the Ombudsman's Whistleblower Support Team which:

- offers support that is confidential and impartial
- can provide general information about making a public interest disclosure (PID) and help you explore your options at each stage, and
- operates independently from the Ombudsman's other functions of handling complaints/receiving PIDs and advising agencies about how to handle PIDs.

You can remain anonymous when you contact the Whistleblower Support Team. Any identifying information you choose to give us will not be shared outside our Team. You can discuss your concerns about wrongdoing with us, without unintentionally making a PID.

Support from an agency contact officer

After you have reported serious wrongdoing, you should receive support from a dedicated contact officer nominated by the agency which is dealing with your report.

The contact officer can provide you with information about the agency's processes, updates on how the agency is dealing with your report and help if you have any concerns.

Contact the Whistleblower Support Team:

Email whistleblowersupport@ombo.nsw.gov.au | **Web** www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/complaints/whistleblower-support

Phone 1800 716 766 (available 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays).

We are available for phone consultations by prior appointment. You can email us to make an appointment.

Employee Assistance Programs

NSW public sector agencies typically offer their employees free and confidential counselling services.

If you are thinking about reporting serious wrongdoing or have already reported it, and you have concerns that are affecting your wellbeing, you may want to consider contacting your agency's Employee Assistance Program.

Information for managers of whistleblowers

Over the page, *Information for Managers* contains guidance for managers of public officials.

Information for managers about whistleblower support

There is support available for NSW public officials who speak up and report serious wrongdoing in the NSW public sector. Details are outlined over the page.

Your role as a manager

If someone you supervise, or who reports to you directly or indirectly, reports serious wrongdoing to you, your role is to forward that report to a disclosure officer in your agency. Your agency is required to have a Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Policy which sets out the relevant procedures.

You must keep the report and the identity of your staff member confidential except when reporting it to the disclosure officer.

During the process, you might become aware that the staff member who made the report needs support.

The role of the agency contact officer

Your staff member should primarily receive support from a dedicated contact officer nominated by the agency dealing with their report. They can provide your staff member with information about the agency's process, updates on how the agency is dealing with the report and address any concerns.

Independent support from the NSW Ombudsman

There is also independent support for your staff member available from the NSW Ombudsman. It can be accessed before or after the public official speaks up.

The NSW Ombudsman's Whistleblower Support function is intended to complement, but not replace, the support which agencies should provide to PID makers.

You can suggest that your staff member contact the NSW Ombudsman's Whistleblower Support Team if you feel that they:

- could benefit from talking with an independent and impartial Ombudsman officer in a confidential environment about their experience and options
- are not fully satisfied or comfortable with support being provided by the agency which is dealing with their report.

Any public official may also find and contact the Whistleblower Support Team. As that support is confidential, your agency would not be informed when your staff member contacts the Whistleblower Support Team.

Resources for agencies and public officials who deal with PIDs

Guidance for agencies and public officials who deal with PIDs is available at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/guidance-for-organisations/public-interest-disclosures.

Advice, training and other resources can be accessed by emailing pid@ombo.nsw.gov.au or phoning 1800 710 277.