

## The difference between a grievance and a protected disclosure

Line managers should recognise that there is a difference between a grievance and a protected disclosure.

A grievance will concern an employee personally, i.e. the individual may have a complaint about:

- his or her pay or working hours;
- the amount of work that he or she is expected to do;
- working conditions; or
- being bullied by fellow workers.

Examples of the difference between a grievance and a protected disclosure	
Grievance	Protected disclosure
An employee's complaint about the type of work that he or she is being asked to do, for example if it is not covered by his or her contract	A disclosure that an individual has been instructed to carry out action that he or she genuinely believes to be illegal e.g. falsify tax returns
An employee's complaint that he or she has received insufficient safety training	A disclosure that safety rules within the workplace are routinely being flouted, thus endangering safety
An employee's complaint about the hours that he or she is expected to work	A disclosure that the requirements imposed by the company on a group of staff represent a breach of the Working Time Legislation
Dos and don'ts	
<p><b>Do</b> adopt an objective and balanced approach towards any allegations made under a Whistleblowing policy.</p> <p><b>Do</b> face the substance of any disclosure square on.</p> <p><b>Do</b> take prompt action to investigate any allegations made under a whistle blowing policy (or make sure another appropriate person instigates an investigation).</p> <p><b>Do</b> encourage an individual who has come forward to disclose some sort of wrongdoing to explain fully the evidence that he or she has of the wrongdoing.</p> <p><b>Do</b> ask the whistleblower to provide specific examples of the conduct that he or she has observed or the evidence obtained to support the allegations of malpractice.</p> <p><b>Do</b> distinguish between facts and opinions.</p> <p><b>Do</b> appreciate that it can be very stressful for the person alleging wrongdoing.</p> <p><b>Do</b> let the Whistleblower know that he or she has the organisation's support.</p> <p><b>Don't</b> get angry or defensive if an individual raises allegations of malpractice within the organisation.</p> <p><b>Don't</b> allow personal views about the whistleblower to influence the assessment of the allegations that he or she is making.</p> <p><b>Don't</b> react negatively to a disclosure, or adopt a judgemental attitude.</p> <p><b>Don't</b> dismiss an employee's disclosure as an exaggeration, or as trivial, unless there is clear evidence that the allegations are unfounded.</p>	