
Whistleblowing policy¹

UNRESTRICTED

This policy was approved by the Trustees on 6 October 2023 and will be reviewed not later than 2027.

1. This policy and the supporting Whistleblowing procedure protect individuals engaged by the British Museum (the “Museum”) against victimisation or dismissal if they raise concerns about fraud, bribery or other malpractice at the Museum, provided that they have acted responsibly and out of a genuine concern. An “individual engaged by the Museum” means any employee, contractor, intern, casual worker, volunteer or a member of agency staff.
2. Any individual engaged by the Museum is encouraged to make a complaint if:
 - 2.1 s/he has a concern that s/he is being, has been or is likely to be required to act in a way which:
 - (i) is illegal or involves deliberate maladministration, miscarriage of justice, fraud, bribery or misuse of public funds;
 - (ii) is in breach of a professional code applicable to her/him;
 - (iii) is otherwise inconsistent with the Museum's Standards of Conduct policy or other policies; or
 - (iv) is improper, unethical or raises a fundamental issue of conscience for her/him.
 - 2.2 evidence comes into her/his hands that others within the Museum are being required to engage in, conceal, or are actually engaging in action which falls within paragraph 2.1 above.
3. This policy is not an alternative to the disciplinary and grievance procedures. Nor does it override the Museum's Anti-Money Laundering, Prevention of Tax Evasion and Refusal of Donations policy, which shall prevail whenever it applies.

¹ Having regard to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and Managing Public Money Paragraph 19.1 of ANNEX 7.2

4. The Museum nominates members of staff and the Chair of the Audit Committee as “investigators” for the purposes of its Whistleblowing procedure and entrusts them with the confidential duty of investigating complaints made by individuals engaged by the Museum (“complainants”) under this policy and the Whistleblowing procedure.
5. Investigators will be provided with the necessary training to ensure that they fully understand this policy and the Whistleblowing procedure, the need for confidentiality, and the protection of complainants from discrimination or unfair treatment.
6. A copy of this policy will be supplied to the Trade Unions and to any staff counselling service operated by the Museum. This policy will be published on the Museum’s intranet.
7. Subject always to the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996 concerning making a protected disclosure the overriding principle is that individuals engaged by the Museum are subject to an implied or explicit contractual term of trust and confidence (which is also set out in the Code of Conduct for Staff and Standards of Conduct policy, and which prevents them from disclosing the Museum’s confidential information, except in the public interest in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000). Nothing in this policy shall apply so as to undermine that principle.
8. Anyone who is the subject of a complaint under this policy shall:
 - 7.1 be offered appropriate counselling and/or advised that they can consult with a Trade Union representative if they belong to a recognised Trade Union; and
 - 7.2 have the normal rights and protection appropriate to any subsequent disciplinary procedures.
8. Disciplinary procedures may be invoked if:
 - 8.1 Anyone threatens or subjects any complainant or other individual engaged by the Museum to any detrimental treatment as a result of a complaint under this policy.
 - 8.2 The Museum considers that a complainant has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain.
9. Disciplinary action will not be taken against a complainant, even if no evidence can be found to substantiate his/her concern, providing s/he has acted in accordance with this policy.
10. This policy does not form a part of the contract of employment of any employee of the Museum.
11. In addition to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, the Governance pages of the Museum’s external website also sets out the Enquiries and Feedback Handling Procedure for visitors and members of the public.