



Organisational culture: The importance of speaking up and listening

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15 June 2023



Organisational culture and ethical leadership

- Ethics is the responsibility of everyone within an organisation.
- Speak up mechanisms are vitally important.
- A speak up culture allows issues to be dealt with at the earliest opportunity before they escalate.
- People need to take the lead and be able to speak their mind for the good of the organisation.



Speaking up

- Speaking up should be viewed as beneficial by organisations.
- If a problem is left to fester, the potential harm increases.
- But speaking up is not always easy.
- Individuals should be encouraged and empowered to have the confidence to speak up.
- People need to feel comfortable that they will be supported and not suffer any detriment.
- People need to feel safe and be able to trust in the authenticity of the speak up mechanism.



Listening

- Organisations have a responsibility to listen to their employees and then act on what has been heard.
- People need to know that the raising of concerns is appreciated and will be given appropriate consideration.
- Individuals need to know that they will be protected from retaliation, and that change does happen.
- If people feel that speaking up would be futile, they will not put themselves at risk by reporting.



What can you do? Speak up

- Be aware that speaking up can be challenging.
- Consider carefully how to raise an issue for maximum effect.
- It is better to deal with issues at the earliest possible stage.
- Do not tackle an issue alone. Speak to a trusted colleague or friend.
- Always keep an evidence-trail of conversations, emails and documents.
- If concerns are about the conduct or behaviours of an immediate superior, raise the issue with more than one person.



What can you do? Speak up (cont'd)

- Contact your professional body for support and guidance.
- Seek advice from a specialist whistleblowing charity e.g. Protect <https://protect-advice.org.uk/>
- If all else fails, you may need to whistleblow externally.
- The gov.uk website has a list of prescribed people and bodies you can report malpractice to, other than your employer - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>



What can you do? Listen up

- Make people feel comfortable and safe.
- Give people full attention.
- Listen to how issues are raised.
- Show appreciation to the individuals who do raise their concerns.
- ‘Effective listening’ involves listening and then acting on what has been heard.
- Concerns raised should be investigated promptly, with feedback being provided to the employee on how the matter has been dealt with.



Organisational culture and speak up - What can you do?

- Speak up and listen up policies and procedures.
- Safety and trust.
- Increase awareness.
- Listening needs to 'lead to' action.
- Communication of outcomes.
- Provide assurances retaliation will not be tolerated.

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