

**TRANSPORT FOR LONDON**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**SUBJECT: INDEPENDENT REPORTING LINES**

**DATE: 4 MARCH 2010**

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**1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED**

1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the reports to the staff reporting lines in 2009. The Committee is asked to note this report.

**2 BACKGROUND**

2.1 Since 2004 arrangements have been in place to provide staff with access to independent reporting lines. Annually, this Committee receives a summary of the number and type of reports received.

2.2 Concerns can be raised via the independent reporting lines about any aspect of TfL's activities. This includes the safety of the public and/or staff, fraud or financial negligence, harassment, bullying, or discrimination. Also covered would be any decisions, actions, conduct or communications that are unlawful, or in breach of TfL's policies or in significant breach of its core values.

2.3 TfL has committed to protect anyone who raises such matters, provided the disclosures are made without malice and in good faith, regardless of whether the concern raised is upheld.

2.4 The internal line is managed by the General Counsel and the external line which is branded as SafeLine is managed, since September 2009, by Crimestoppers, a totally independent company. Prior to that date the external line had been managed by Safecall, another totally independent company.

2.5 These reporting mechanisms are an additional facility and do not replace normal reporting channels. The preferred option for reporting concerns in the first instance remains a report to line management. Only when this is inappropriate, for example, because the concern is about a manager's activities, or previous reports have been unsatisfactorily dealt with, should the other reporting mechanisms be used.

2.6 The existence of independent reporting lines is an important safeguard that enables staff to raise concerns within a safe environment. The overall annual cost of the external reporting lines is in the order of £27,000 per annum. This is a reduction from the £40,000 per annum in 2008. The reduction in costs followed a re-tendering exercise in 2009.

### 3 REPORTS IN 2009

3.1 In 2009 there were 41 contacts, of which 16 were anonymous. There were four calls via the internal and 37 via the external reporting line. The table below provides a summary of the nature of the issues involved.

#### **Summary of Internal and External Contacts 2009**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Reports</b>
Integrity (including Fraud)	9
Health and Safety	2
Human Resources	30
Total	41

3.2 Forty one calls represent an increase in the number of reports in 2009 compared to 2008 when there were a total of 33 calls. The first year following the introduction of the Reporting Lines saw an exceptional number of 61 reports. Since then, the number of reports per annum has varied between 31 and 43.

3.3 It is difficult to estimate what would be the expected number of calls to the Reporting Line but comparisons with other organisations suggest TfL receives slightly less than the average. If this is the case, the explanation may be found in the broad number of alternative methods of raising concerns and a high level of union membership providing another avenue to interact with management.

3.4 The breakdown of the categories of concerns raised has remained relatively constant with HR always accounting for more than 50 per cent of reports.

#### **Summary of Outcomes of Contacts**

3.5 The following summarises the current position of the various matters raised:

- all enquiries have been or are being addressed;
- in respect of allegations regarding lack of integrity, where investigations are complete insufficient evidence has been found to justify further action; two allegations are outstanding;

- the concluded HR matters were dealt with through managerial action, five allegations are outstanding; and
  - the Health and Safety matters were dealt with through managerial action and none are outstanding.
- 3.6 Reporting Line reports this year have been concerned with a variety of issues:
- accusations of bullying;
  - alleged unfair employment practices;
  - fraudulent claiming of overtime;
  - unresolved tensions in a team;
  - alleged unsatisfactory performance by sub-contractor's staff; and
  - alleged unreasonable award of a contract.
- 3.7 The reports this year only involved individuals or small groups of people. The monetary sums involved were small in absolute terms and have never been significant in TfL terms.
- 3.8 The most common reasons that a Reporting Line is used are that the issue is with the immediate manager of the reporter or because of a fear of reprisals.
- 3.9 A staff member or contractor rings the external or internal Reporting Line, the matter is then reported confidentially to the Corporate Governance Adviser, who notifies a gatekeeper in the respective part of the organisation where it is investigated. Once the investigations are concluded the manager of the Reporting Line is then notified. The Corporate Governance Adviser monitors the outstanding investigations and ensures that they are concluded.
- 3.10 The number of reports received since the change of provider suggests there has been no adverse effect and the publicity surrounding the change resulted in a small rise in the number of calls. Raising awareness of the reporting lines service is undertaken at regular intervals. Details of how to contact both internal and external reporting lines is included in the TfL Code of Conduct, which is given to all new staff. In addition to contacting SafeLine by telephone there is now a facility to do so by email.
- 3.11 The focus of the publicity during 2009 was on publicising the change of provider from Safecall to SafeLine and the resultant change in the reporting telephone number. A communications plan is in place for 2010. This will include a poster campaign, leaflets, payroll messages, messages in the weekly bulletin and a front piece message on TfL's intranet.

## **4 EQUALITIES AND INCLUSION**

- 4.1 The existence of the Reporting Lines provides another means for TfL staff to raise equality and inclusion concerns either for themselves or on behalf of others. There were a number of reports relating to harassment of various types and the subsequent investigations routinely examine the relevant equality and inclusion issues.

## **5 CRIME AND DISORDER**

- 5.1 The existence of the Reporting Lines similarly provides another means for TfL staff to raise crime and disorder concerns, either for themselves, or on behalf of others.

## **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to NOTE this report.

## **7 CONTACT**

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