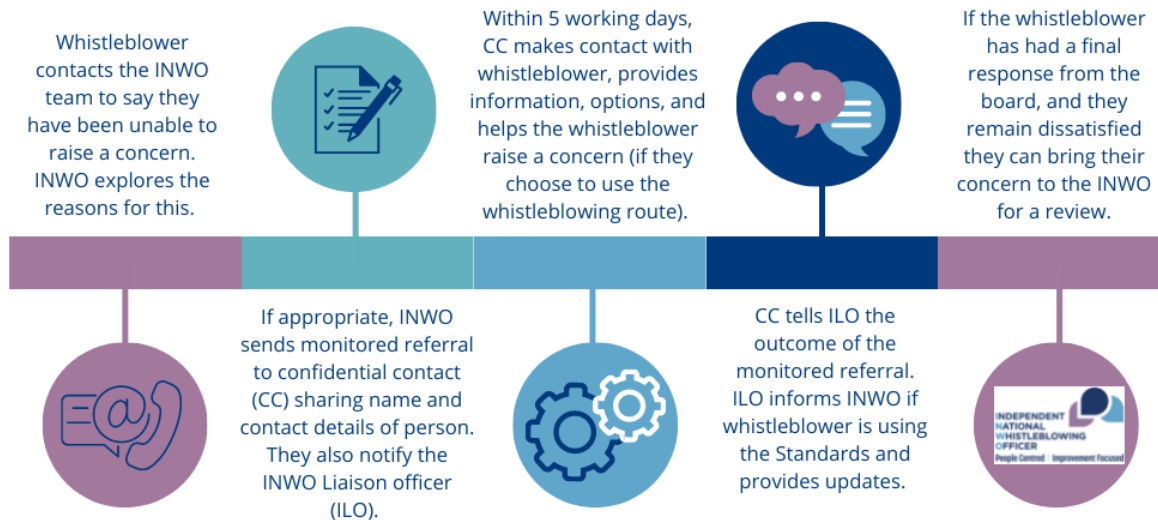


## Monitored referrals



When the INWO receives a complaint that has not yet been through the local whistleblowing procedure we will examine why this has happened. If it is because the person has not been aware of the local procedure, we will normally signpost them to raise their concerns with the organisation first. Our guiding principle is that - wherever possible - the organisation should have a chance to consider the whistleblowing concerns at the local level, and to deliver the most appropriate outcomes for their service.

However, we recognise that people can sometimes find it difficult to access or complete the local procedure, either because they need additional support, or because the process is not functioning as it should. When this happens we may suggest using our 'monitored referral' process. This aims to create a safe route for people to access the whistleblowing procedure at the local level. This is particularly appropriate when someone needs support or has experienced barriers to raising concerns with the organisation (or both).

Through the monitored referral process we support the person in sharing their concerns with the local confidential contact. We also gain assurance that the

concern is being appropriately handled under the Standards. Sometimes a referral involves asking an organisation to take specific steps such as assessing a person's support needs, or protecting them from detriment. The requirements will vary from case to case, depending on the risks of harm and the actions taken by the organisation so far.

A monitored referral will not proceed without explicit informed consent from the person who has raised a concern with the INWO.

Our letter to the confidential contact will normally contain:

- details of the concerns raised;
- the name and contact details of the whistleblower so that they can be contacted;
- any support needs that the whistleblower has agreed we can share;
- the reason why we have made a monitored referral; and
- any additional requirements; for example, to put a strategy in place to prevent detriment.

We will also notify the INWO liaison officer at the organisation that a concern has been raised, but we would not normally share the name and contact details of the complainant with them at this stage. Our purpose in contacting the liaison officer is to ensure that the confidential contact is supported and that the organisation is aware a concern has been raised.

As with the rest of the whistleblowing process, confidentiality must be strictly maintained. The identity of the whistleblower will only be shared with their permission, only used where necessary, and only for the purposes of handling their concern and providing support.

We normally expect the confidential contact to speak with the whistleblower within five working days. If the whistleblower wishes to proceed with the process, the confidential contact should help them to raise their concerns with the most appropriate manager. The confidential contact should also discuss with the whistleblower who the concern will be passed to, and discuss what support the person needs.

Once the confidential contact has met with the whistleblower, they should contact the INWO liaison officer who will (on behalf of the organisation):

- confirm to the INWO if the concern is eligible for consideration under the Standards procedure or not;
- (if eligible) ensure that the concern is handled under the two-stage procedure;
- provide information to the INWO based on the requirements of the monitored referral relating to preventing detriment or providing support for the whistleblower;
- provide updates to the INWO at the same time that these are provided to the whistleblower, in line with the Standards;
- tell the INWO when the local process has been completed and a response has been issued.

The monitored referral does not impact on the organisation's obligation to issue a response to the whistleblower. The organisation should still refer the whistleblower to the INWO if they remain unhappy with the outcome.

The INWO team will monitor the referral until we are satisfied that the organisation has provided a response. Where there is evidence to doubt that the concern is being handled appropriately, the INWO will consider what support or intervention is needed to ensure an appropriate outcome.

