



# **Anti-Bribery Policy**

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**Version 2.0**

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## 1. Policy statement

Bribery is a criminal offence. We do not, and will not, pay bribes or offer improper inducements to anyone for any purpose, nor do we or will we, accept bribes or improper inducements.

To use a third party as a conduit to channel bribes to others is a criminal offence. We do not, and will not, engage indirectly in or otherwise encourage bribery.

We are committed to the prevention, deterrence and detection of bribery. We have zero-tolerance towards bribery. We aim to maintain anti-bribery compliance “business as usual” rather than as a one-off exercise.

### 1.1 Objective of policy

This policy provides a coherent and consistent framework to enable the Council’s Members and employees to understand and implement arrangements enabling compliance. In conjunction with related policies and key documents it will also enable both Members and employees to identify and effectively report a potential breach.

We require that **all** Members and personnel, including those permanently employed, temporary agency staff and contractors:

- act honestly and with integrity at all times and to safeguard the Council’s resources for which they are responsible
- comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions in which the Council operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of activities.

### 1.2 Scope of policy

This policy applies to all of the Council’s activities. For partners, joint ventures and suppliers, we will seek to promote the adoption of policies consistent with the principles set out in this policy.

With the Council, the responsibility to control the risk of bribery occurring resides at all levels of the organisation. It does not rest solely within assurance functions, but in all business units and corporate functions.

This policy covers all personnel, including all levels and grades, those permanently employed, temporary agency staff, contractors, non-executives, agents, Members (including independent members), volunteers and consultants.

### **1.3 Brentwood Borough Council's commitment to action**

This organisation commits to:

- Setting out a clear anti-bribery policy and keeping it up to date
- Making Members aware of their of their responsibilities to adhere to this policy at all times
- Making all employees aware of their responsibilities to adhere strictly to this policy at all times
- Training for all Members and employees so that they can recognise and avoid the use of bribery by themselves and others
- Encouraging both its Members and employees to be vigilant and to report any suspicions of bribery, providing them with suitable channels of communication and ensuring sensitive information is treated appropriately
- Rigorously investigating instances of alleged bribery and assisting police and other appropriate authorities in any resultant prosecution.
- Taking firm and vigorous action against any individual(s) involved in bribery
- Provide information to all Members and employees to report breaches and suspected breaches of this policy
- Include appropriate clauses in contracts to prevent bribery.

### **1.4 What is bribery?**

Bribery is an inducement or reward offered, promised or provided to gain personal, commercial, regulatory or contractual advantage. The Bribery Act 2010 has been enacted to enable robust action against such activity and came into force on 1 July 2011.

### **1.5 Key points of the Bribery Act 2010**

There are four key offences under the Act:

- Bribery of another person (section 1)
- Accepting a bribe (section 2)
- Bribing a foreign official (section 6)
- Failing to prevent bribery (section 7)

The Bribery Act 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/23/contents>) makes it an offence to offer, promise or give a bribe (Section 1). It also makes it an offence to request, agree to receive, or accept a bribe (Section 2). Section 6 of the Act creates a separate offence of bribing a foreign public official with the intention of obtaining or retaining business or an advantage in the conduct of business. There is also a corporate offence under Section 7 of failure by a commercial organisation to prevent bribery that is intended to obtain or retain business, or an advantage in the conduct of business for the organisation. An organisation will have a defence to this corporate

offence if it can show that it had in place adequate procedures designed to prevent bribery by or of persons associated with the organisation.

## 1.6 Are we a “commercial organisation”?

The guidance states that a “commercial organisation” is any body formed in the United Kingdom and “...it does not matter if it pursues primarily charitable or educational aims or purely public function. It will be caught if it engages in commercial activities, irrespective of the purpose for which profits are made”. The Council is therefore, a “commercial organisation”.

## 2. Anti Bribery Procedures

### 2.1 What are “adequate procedures”?

Whether the procedures are adequate will ultimately be a matter for the courts to decide on a case-by-case basis. Adequate procedures need to be applied proportionately, based on the level of risk of bribery in the organisation. It is for individual organisations to determine proportionate procedures in the recommended areas of six principles. These principles are not prescriptive. They are intended to be flexible and outcome focussed, allowing for the different circumstances of organisations. Small organisations will, for example, face different challenges to those faced by large multi-national enterprises. The detail of how organisations apply these principles will vary, but the outcome should always be robust and effective anti-bribery procedures.

The six principles are:

- **Proportionate procedures:** An organisation’s procedures to prevent bribery by persons associated with it are proportionate to the bribery risks it faces and to the nature, scale and complexity of the organisation’s activities. They are also clear, practical, accessible, effectively implemented and enforced.
- **Top level commitment:** The top-level management (be it a board of directors, the owners or any other equivalent body or person) are committed to preventing bribery by persons associated with it. They foster a culture within the organisation in which bribery is never acceptable.
- **Risk Assessment:** The organisation assesses the nature and extent of its exposure to the potential external and internal risks of bribery on its behalf by persons associated with it. The assessment is periodic, informed and documented. It includes financial risks but also other risks such as reputational damage.
- **Due diligence:** The organisation applies due diligence procedures, taking a proportionate and risk based approach, in respect of persons who perform or will

perform services for or on behalf of the organisation, in order to mitigate identified bribery risks.

- **Communication (including training):** The organisation seeks to ensure that its bribery prevention policies and procedures are embedded and understood throughout the organisation through internal and external communication, including training that is proportionate to the risks it faces.
- **Monitoring and review:** The organisation monitors and reviews procedures designed to prevent bribery by persons associated with it and makes improvements where necessary.

**Brentwood Borough Council is committed to proportional implementation of these principles.**

## 2.2 Penalties

An individual guilty of an offence under sections 1, 2 or 6 is liable:

- On conviction in magistrates court, to imprisonment for a maximum term of 12 months (six months in Northern Ireland), or to a fine not exceeding £5,000 or to both
- On conviction in a crown court, to imprisonment for a maximum term of ten years, or to an unlimited fine, or both.

Organisations are liable for those fines and if guilty of an offence under section 7 are liable to an unlimited fine.

## 2.3 Bribery is not tolerated

It is unacceptable to:

- give, promise to give, or offer a payment, gift or hospitality with the expectation or hope that a business advantage will be received, or to reward a business advantage already given
- give, promise to give, or offer a payment, gift or hospitality to a government official, agent or representative to “facilitate” or expedite a routine procedure
- accept payment from a third party that you know or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them.
- accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if you know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that a business advantage will be provided by us in return
- retaliate against or threaten a person who has refused to commit a bribery offence or who has raised concerns under this policy
- engage in activity in breach of this policy

## 2.4 Facilitation payments

Facilitation payments are not tolerated and are illegal. Facilitation payments are unofficial payments made to public officials in order to secure or expedite actions.

## 2.5 Gifts and Hospitality

This policy does not change the requirements of the Council's Gifts and Hospitality guidance nor does it interfere with the duties on Members to disclose as set out in the Code of Conduct under the Localism Act. All staff should ensure that they are in compliance with Gifts and Hospitality procedures as set out in the [Staff Code of Conduct](#). Similarly, Members should ensure they comply with requirements of Gifts and Hospitality as set out in the [Members Code of Conduct](#).

## 2.6 Public contracts and failure to prevent bribery

Under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (which gives effect to EU law in the UK), a company is automatically and perpetually debarred from competing for public contracts where it is convicted of a corruption offence. There are no plans to amend the 2006 regulations for this to include the crime of failure to prevent bribery. Organisations that are convicted of failing to prevent bribery are not automatically barred from participating in tenders for public contracts. However, the Council has the discretion to exclude organisations convicted of this offence.

## 2.7 Staff and Members responsibilities

The prevention, detection and reporting of bribery and other forms of corruption are the responsibility of all those working for Brentwood Borough Council or under its control. All Members and staff are required to avoid activity that breaches this policy.

You must:

- ensure that you read, understand and comply with this policy
- raise concerns as soon as possible if you believe or suspect that a conflict with this policy has occurred, or may occur in the future.

As well as the possibility of civil and criminal prosecution, staff that breach this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. Similarly Members will face action through the Standards Committee for breaches of the Code of Member Conduct.

## 2.8 How do I raise a concern?

Brentwood Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all of us have a safe, reliable and confidential way of reporting any suspicious activity. We want each and every member of staff to know how they can raise concerns.

We all have a responsibility to help detect, prevent and report instances of bribery. If you have a concern regarding a suspected instance of bribery or corruption, please speak up – your information and assistance will help. The sooner you act, the sooner it can be resolved.

There are multiple channels to help you raise concerns. The Council has a Whistleblowing Policy and it provides for reporting issues in a way which provides protection of identity. Please refer to the [Whistle Blowing Procedures](#).

Preferably, the disclosure will be made and resolved internally. However, where internal disclosure proves inappropriate, concerns can be raised with the regulator. Raising concerns in these ways may be more likely to be considered reasonable than making disclosures publicly (e.g. to the media).

Concerns can be anonymous. In the event that an incident of bribery, corruption, or wrongdoing is reported, we will act as soon as possible to evaluate the situation. The Council has clearly defined procedures for investigating fraud, misconduct and non-compliance issues and these will be followed in any investigation of this kind. This is easier and quicker if concerns raised are not raised anonymously.

Staff who refuse to accept or the offer of a bribe, or those who raise concerns or report wrongdoing can understandably be worried about the repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support anyone who raises a genuine concern in good faith under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

The Council are committed to ensuring nobody suffers detrimental treatment through refusing to take part in bribery or corruption, or because of reporting a concern in good faith.

## 2.9 Useful links

[Bribery Act quick start guide](#)

[Joint Prosecution Guidance](#)

[National Fraud Authority](#)

[Transparency International](#)

[Public Concern at Work](#)



Department for Business Innovation and Skills (Blowing the whistle to a prescribed person)