

**GMCA Audit Committee**

Date: 30 June 2020

Subject: Annual report on the outcome of whistleblowing referrals

Report of: Steve Wilson, GMCA Treasurer

---

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Committee with a summary of the outcomes of whistleblowing referrals received in 2019/20, as required under Section G of the GMCA Constitution “Complaints and Whistleblowing”.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Committee notes the report

**CONTACT OFFICERS:**

**Steve Wilson, Treasurer – GMCA**  
[steve.wilson@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:steve.wilson@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

**Sarah Horseman, Head of Audit and Assurance - GMCA**  
[sarah.horseman@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.horseman@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

Risk Management – N/A

Legal Considerations – N/A

Financial Consequences – N/A

Financial Consequences – N/A

Number of attachments included in the report: N/A

**BACKGROUND PAPERS: N/A**

<b>TRACKING/PROCESS</b>		
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution		No
<b>EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN</b>		
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?		N/A
TfGMC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
N/A	N/A	

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. The GMCA Whistleblowing Policy is a vital part of the GMCA's governance arrangements and is designed to allow employees or others, with serious concerns about any aspect of the GMCA's work or that of its partners, to come forward and voice those concerns without fear of reprisal.
- 1.2. In the event that an individual becomes aware of activities which they believe to be illegal, improper, unethical or inconsistent with this Constitution, individuals are encouraged to report their concerns in line with procedures set out in the Whistleblowing policy.
- 1.3. Whistleblowing concerns related to the GMCA functions, including Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, are referred to the Head of Audit and Assurance.
- 1.4. Section G of the GMCA Constitution "Complaints and Whistleblowing" states that the GMCA Standards Committee are responsible for reviewing the Whistleblowing Policies and approving any necessary changes. The GMCA Treasurer and Chief Executive Officer are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Whistleblowing Policy and process with periodic reports provided to Audit Committee on the outcome of whistleblowing referrals.
- 1.5. This report provides the Audit Committee with a summary of the outcomes of whistleblowing referrals received by the Head of Audit and Assurance in the financial year 2019/20.

## **2. Confidentiality**

- 2.1. To protect the confidentiality of whistleblowers and other parties involved, no information is included here that would enable a worker who has made the disclosure, or the place or person about whom a disclosure has been made to be identified.

## **3. Assessment of disclosures and types of actions taken**

- 3.1. The Whistleblowing Policy should not to be used where other more appropriate internal reporting procedures are available. There are existing procedures which enable employees to lodge a grievance relating to their conditions of employment, raise matters of harassment or to make a general complaint, which by contrast, generally have no additional public interest dimension.
- 3.2. The Whistleblowing Policy covers concerns that fall outside the scope of those existing internal procedures. However, in the event that allegations made through the above procedures raise serious concerns over wrongdoing, the GMCA will investigate under the whistleblowing process.
- 3.3. Upon receipt of a disclosure, the Head of Audit and Assurance (or other nominated recipient if the disclosure relates to Internal Audit) first confirms the disclosure does fall outside of other internal or external reporting procedures. Once confirmed, the disclosure

will then be investigated in line with the Whistleblowing Policy. If the disclosure does not fall within the Whistleblowing Policy it will be passed on to the relevant Officer/organisation to manage it through the appropriate mechanism.

3.4. Taking this into consideration, the following outcomes of disclosures may be observed

<b>Action Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
Referred to appropriate internal procedure	This applies to disclosures which fall under one of the other GMCA policies, such as grievances, misconduct, disciplinary matters or complaints of bullying and harassment.
Referred to other party	This applies to disclosures which were received but were for parties/organisations other than GMCA (including GMFRS and GM LEP) and were therefore referred to the relevant organisation/Authority.
Closed with no action taken	This applies to disclosures which have been identified as a qualifying whistleblowing disclosures but initial assessment and fact finding could not establish sufficient detail or credibility to progress.
Investigation completed – no action taken	This applies to disclosures which have been identified as a qualifying whistleblowing disclosures but where investigations have found no evidence of wrongdoing and no areas for process and control improvement were identified.
Investigation completed – action taken	This applies to disclosures which have been identified as a qualifying whistleblowing disclosures and where investigations have upheld the allegations and appropriate actions have been taken against individuals concerned.
Investigation completed – organisational actions	This applies to disclosures which have been identified as a qualifying whistleblowing disclosures and where investigations have found areas where improvements in processes and controls are necessary. Complaints of wrongdoing by individuals were not however upheld.
Under review	This applies to disclosures which have been identified as a qualifying whistleblowing disclosures but where investigations have not yet been completed.

#### 4. Annual report of whistleblowing outcomes 2019/20

4.1. From 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 four whistleblowing disclosures were made to the Head of Audit and Assurance

4.2. Actions taken in response to disclosures

Action Type	Number of referrals
Referred to appropriate internal procedure	2
Referred to other party	1
Closed with no action taken	-
Investigation completed – no action taken	-
Investigation completed – action taken	-
Investigation completed – organisational actions	1
Under review	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>