



IMPACT REPORT

Our impact in 2021

*We want a world where no whistleblower
goes unheard or unprotected*

20

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OUR VISION

We want a world where no whistleblower goes unheard or unprotected.

OUR VALUES

We are **SUPPORTIVE**

we support whistleblowers to raise concerns, and we support employers to establish effective whistleblowing arrangements

We are **INDEPENDENT**

we are honest, trusted and impartial

We are **EXPERT**

based on our experience over nearly 30 years, we explain the value of whistleblowing and we produce compelling evidence for policy changes

We are **COLLABORATIVE**

we listen to and empower staff, we encourage diversity and working with others.

2021 BY NUMBERS



2,700

New cases handled by the
Advice Line



1.3 million

We estimate that our advice
could affect over 1.3 million
workers



500

Engagement with 500 plus existing
and prospective clients across
training, consultancy, Whistleblowing
Benchmark support, and webinars



300

Delegates attend launch webinars
for Let's Fix UK Whistleblowing
Law



259,405

Page views. Average time
spent on our website -
22% increase from 2020



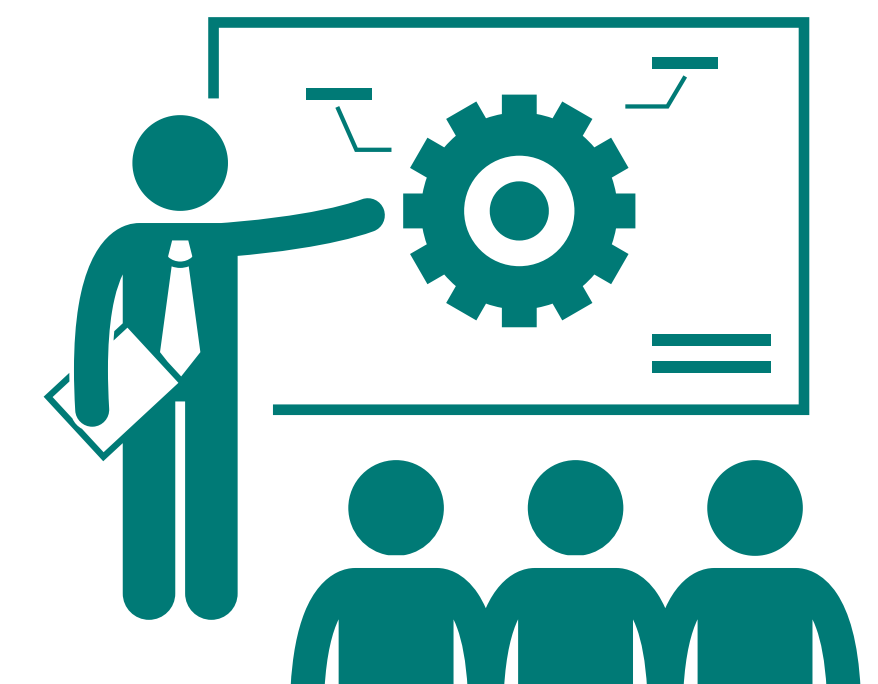
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Parliamentary Questions
raised in Parliament by
Protect supporting
whistleblowers and legal
reform



40

Pieces of high profile national and
trade media including BBC news,
File on 4, The Daily Telegraph,
Daily Express and radio interviews



46

Online in-house training
sessions delivered
attended by almost 500
delegates

INTRODUCTION

Our day-to-day work supporting both whistleblowers and employers makes Protect unique and the experts in whistleblowing. Protect's annual Impact Report reflects our achievements over the past 12 months, but also offers insight into the state of whistleblowing in the UK and the variety of employer arrangements – or indeed the lack of them. This year our report includes some early statistics on the characteristics of whistleblowers using our advice line, which we'll continue to monitor. With so many of our callers on low incomes, paying for legal representation is out of the question, and this clearly impacts on their access to justice via the tribunal. The early advice that Protect can provide – to help them safely raise concerns with least risk to their own position – is vital.

Overall, in 2021 we supported 2,700 whistleblowers needing advice on their legal rights and how to raise concerns by phone and email. The topics raised also reflect the wider changes we've seen in society about what may count as whistleblowing following the #Metoo and BLM movements. Since 2017, we have had a 100% increase in the proportion of harassment in all new cases. In response, we've developed training for employers on how to prevent sexual harassment and how to deal with misconduct in the workplace.

Many workplaces are changing and it is encouraging to see a clear businesses focus on ESG (environmental, social and governance) where whistleblowing and creating a safe culture for speaking up is key. We were pleased to contribute to the first International Standard on Whistleblowing Management Systems (ISO 37002:21) which launched in 2021. And in Europe, the new Whistleblowing Directive passed, heralding a new era where all but the very smallest organisations are expected not just to have a policy, but quite detailed channels and processes for whistleblowing.

We know many of our Members are keen to develop gold standard practices, and we held two webinars outlining why it's important to match EU Directive standards. Our Business Support Team offered new training courses to Members, and refreshed our flagship product, our Whistleblowing Benchmark to reflect EU Whistleblowing Directive guidelines. Overall we supported over 500 employers in 2021, with a collective workforce of over 1.3 million. We also embarked on a collaborative project with a small cohort of our employer members to explore best practice against whistleblower victimisation – and this will be published in Spring 2022.



Elizabeth Gardiner, CEO Protect

PROTECT STAFF TALKING VALUES



Grace Wilkin
Account Manager



I joined Protect in July as Business Support Executive. I wanted to work for a charity and as I had a legal background studying law at university, it was the perfect role for me as I was interested in helping organisations.

The role is interesting as its not just sales – as well as supporting existing members with ongoing training and events, I am explaining the vital role whistleblowing plays. There are still many organisations out there with the view ‘its compliance – that’s why we are doing it’ but its part of our role to change that mindset and convince organisations of the benefits of a strong and healthy whistleblowing culture and why organisations with integrity choose Protect to support their whistleblowing systems.

Our new training classes – such as our investigations class - has been a huge success. Next year we look to develop more new training classes potentially collaborating with new partners which will be fantastic for existing and new employer members.



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“For whistleblowing to be effective it requires a collective effort to ensure constructive systems are in place, and that workplace environments support the raising of such concerns. The role of Protect’s Business Support Team is to collaborate with organisations to really drive this collective effort.

After graduating with a law degree, I never expected I’d work in a ‘sales’ role, but the role is not really like any other sales role. There’s an educational concept to it and I really appreciate the opportunity to make a tangible difference to people’s lives. Of course, the role is not always easy. A big stigma to overcome is organisations believing a policy in place is enough, when in fact a far more comprehensive approach is required. As I explain to existing and new clients, its vital to engage with staff and ensure there is no disconnect from what is written in their policy to what happens in practice. Many organisations simply do not appreciate the depth of proactivity needed to create the gold standard whistleblowing arrangements.

These challenges however, are what make our work at Protect so interesting, and I really enjoy the variety of clients we work with. The concepts and processes of whistleblowing are always evolving, and it is our responsibility to provide day to day support for organisations, as well as welcoming and introducing potential new members to the benefits of whistleblowing. This continuous effort will aid organisations in keeping their staff – and others – safe.”

”



Alex Southworth
Business Support Executive

“

Protect is unique and is the UK's only dedicated whistleblowing Advice Line supporting whistleblowers across all sectors. It offers free, expert, confidential and independent advice which is legally privileged. When you get through to us, you get through to an Adviser who has been heavily trained in whistleblowing law.

Other organisations and hotlines can provide generic advice but will rarely have expertise in whistleblowing law. Many whistleblowers have serious public interest concerns and don't know where to turn. Knowing they can go somewhere that is going to be expert and confidential is extremely important.

We can help in two key areas – the personal situation at work for the whistleblower who may be experiencing difficulties for speaking up (what they can do to minimise the risk of things going wrong, and what remedy they have if things have already gone wrong), and the public interest concern (how to escalate it so that it is addressed). That is unique.

We support whistleblowers through various different stages. We often speak to whistleblowers when they don't know how to raise their concerns, and they might come back to us when they have raised their concerns and unfortunately their employer has not been supportive and they are experiencing detriment, or worse, dismissed. We provide support throughout that journey,

For me, being able to build a relationship with a caller can be challenging, as well as legally interesting, but it is hugely rewarding and an aspect of my role as an Adviser I really enjoy. Many of our whistleblowers tell us that continued support is invaluable. We have many callers we work with over several months and in some complex cases, many years.



Caitlin Comins
Legal Adviser

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Rhiannon Plimmer-Craig
Parliamentary Officer and Senior Adviser



I was promoted to Parliamentary Officer role in 2021, which I divide between my Senior Advisor role on Protect's Advice Line. It's a fairly new role but a vital one, as a key strategic goal for Protect is our legal reform campaign, 'Let's Fix UK Whistleblowing Law' which we launched in April 2021 and which aims to update and improve the UK whistleblowing law, the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

Over 2022 I will be engaging with many more MPs – they all agree whistleblowing is so important – but not much is being done to improve the outcomes for whistleblowers. There are plenty of empty promises. My role along with our Head of Policy is to hold Government Departments such as BEIS over pledges to review whistleblowing. We also want to see MPs do more and back our campaign as a lack of action is a real concern to whistleblowers. We see whistleblowing in news headlines every day and ethical issues over our own Government in 2021 revealed why whistleblowing needs to be at the top of the agenda for law and policymakers.

As well as campaigning our Let's Fix UK Whistleblowing Law, my remit is to monitor opportunities in Parliament on whistleblowing issues – such as non-disclosure agreements and the reform of laws such as the Official Secrets Act which risks harming whistleblowers. Over 2021 Protect responded to 9 consultations, and we will continue this over 2022 showcasing our expertise in whistleblowing.

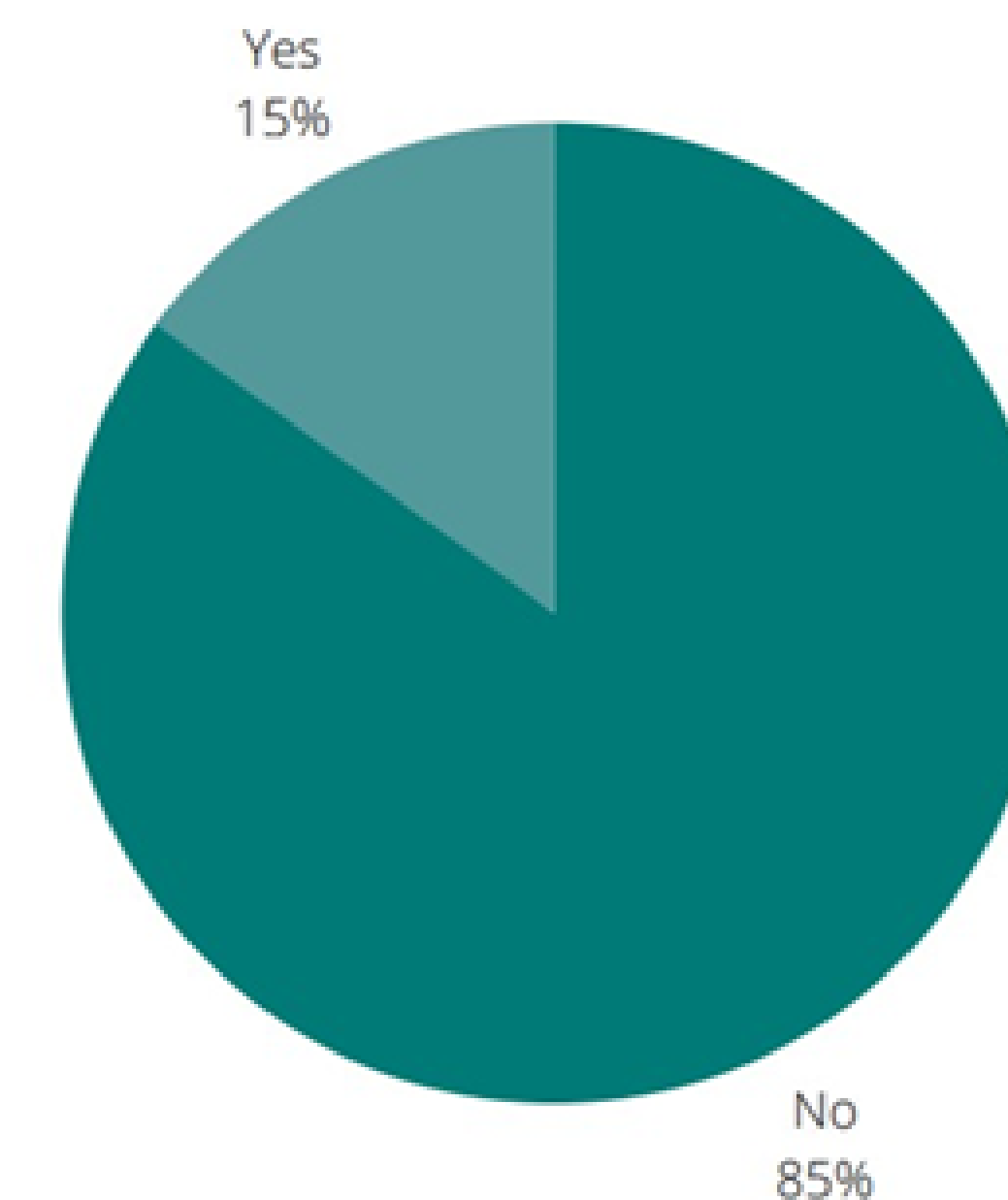
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SUPPORTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

In 2021, following the exceptionally high volume of Covid calls to our Advice Line in 2020 over issues such as furlough fraud, social distancing and PPE, we made a concerted effort for whistleblowers to contact us in different ways. We improved our website advice line content and set up a web contact advice form for whistleblowers to contact us in addition to our advice line to help us triage advice, to maintain case study workloads. In 2021, more than 800 whistleblowers used the new web contact advice form. We conducted an Advice Line survey which revealed just 85% of whistleblowers who called Protect knew what they needed to prove to be protected under the UK whistleblowing law, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This lack of awareness of workers' legal rights and whistleblowing legislation led Protect to conduct further research by YouGov, and the findings influenced our PIDA legal reform campaign, Let's Fix UK Whistleblowing Law.

Evidenced insight: What whistleblowers tell us

Findings from YouGov research commissioned in April 2021 as well as our Advice Line survey of whistleblowers conducted between January-May 2021 reveals a lack of awareness by many workers' of their existing legal rights and whistleblowing legislation. This emphasises the importance of Protect's work and Advice Line and the findings helped us to know what we could do to further support whistleblowers. In 2021 we developed an interim relief web page and a suite of templates to support whistleblowers.



Before calling Protect today did you know what you needed to prove to be protected under the UK whistleblowing law the Public Interest Disclosure Act?

SUPPORTING WHISTLEBLOWERS

Surveys reveals whistleblowing support from employers needs improving

We also wanted to know what employer support whistleblowers would like to see. Our Advice Line survey revealed many whistleblowers did not get the support they needed from their employers with many having a ‘tick-box’ mentality when it came to whistleblowing. Quite reasonably, as demonstrated from the survey comments below, whistleblowers wanted to be listened to when they raised concerns, they wanted action and their concerns to be investigated, and they didn’t want to be victimised or lose their job for having spoken up.

The YouGov survey highlighted how UK workers also wanted all employers to have in place whistleblowing channels/investigate their whistleblowing concerns.

"To immediately investigate my concern and receive protection from bullying colleagues. For my employer to act professionally and responsibly."

"I'd like a response to concerns dealt with immediately. I'd like concerns being discussed openly with all staff, meetings arranged to get to the bottom of issues."

"To have been listened to and have regard to my concern and not to be made redundant for raising it."

"Mental health awareness, stress, anxiety support, any sort of support. Ever since my concern has been raised, I'm cut off from the rest of the company completely."

"Clarity around police investigation and whether that was happening - and what my role would be within it."

"I felt like my employer went through the motions. I would like action to have been taken and dedicated individual support for my case rather than numerous people doing bits and pieces. Going to the EAP didn't change anything and my health was adversely affected. There was never a proper apology and acknowledgement of what happened."

Currently there is no universal requirement for employers to have in place whistleblowing channels or to investigate serious public interest concerns raised by their staff



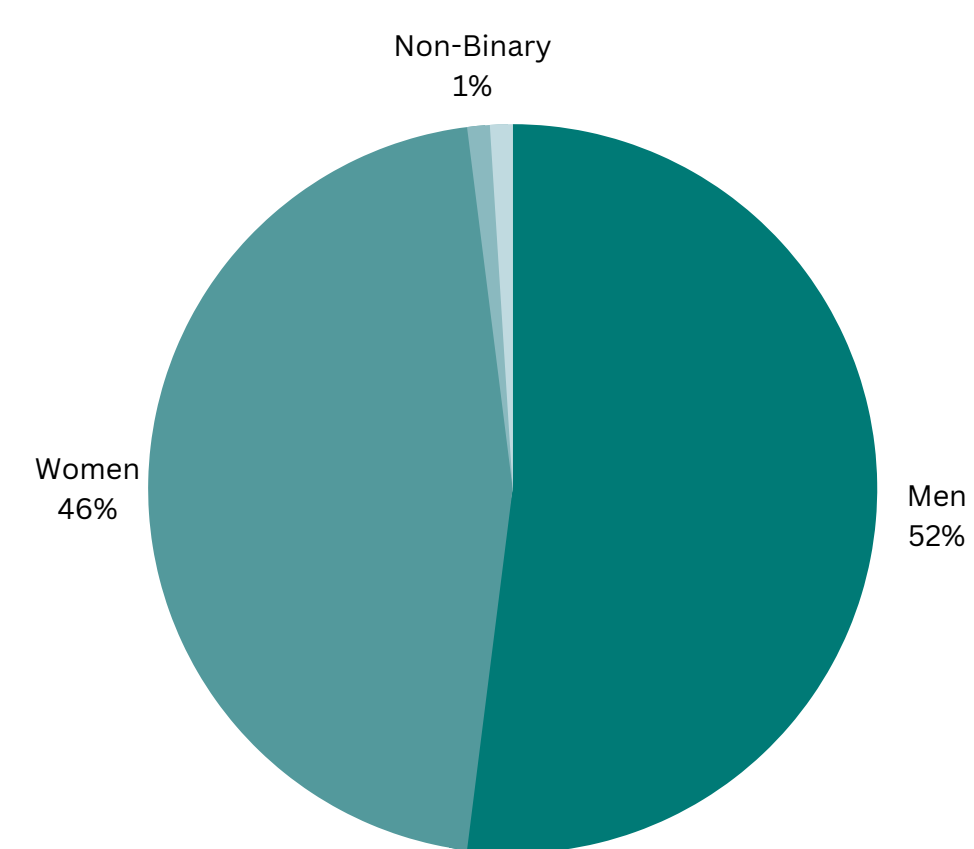
YouGov research highlights that UK workers – 76% – want to see all employers have whistleblowing standards in place.



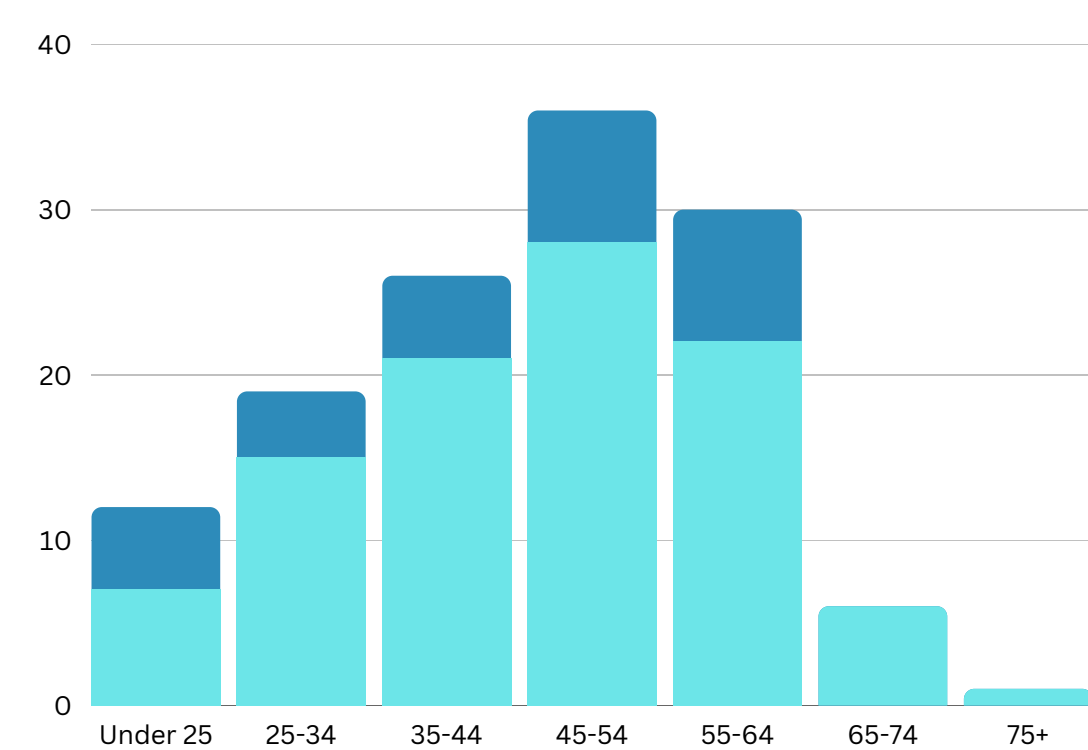
80% of UK workers agree with Protect that employers should face sanctions for breaching those standards.

WHO CALLS OUR ADVICE LINE ?

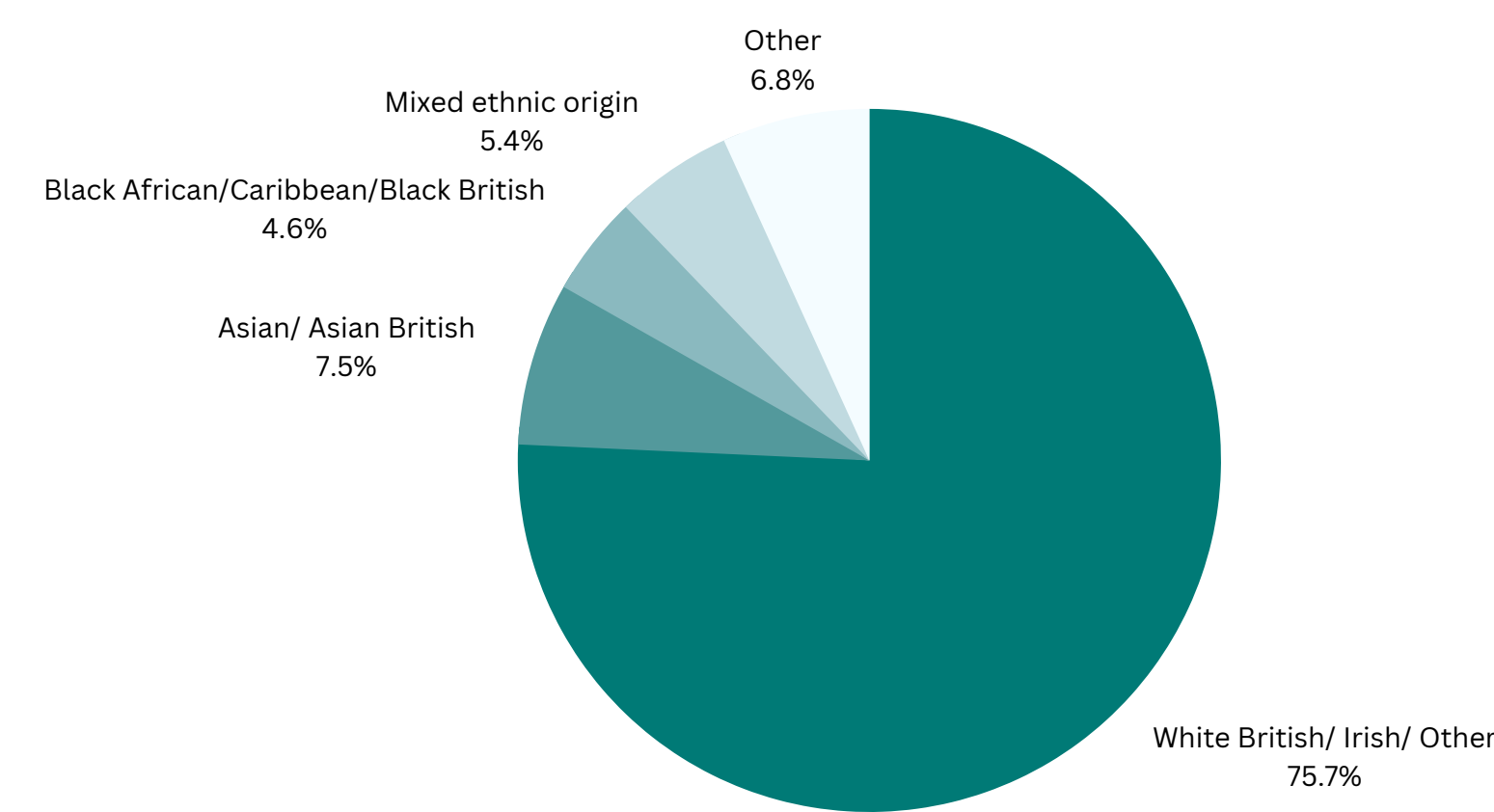
Gender



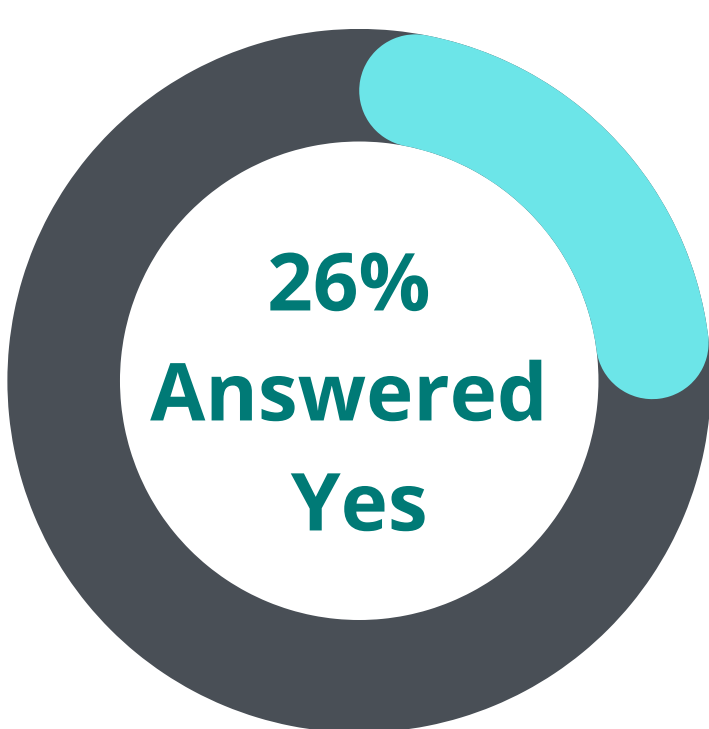
Age



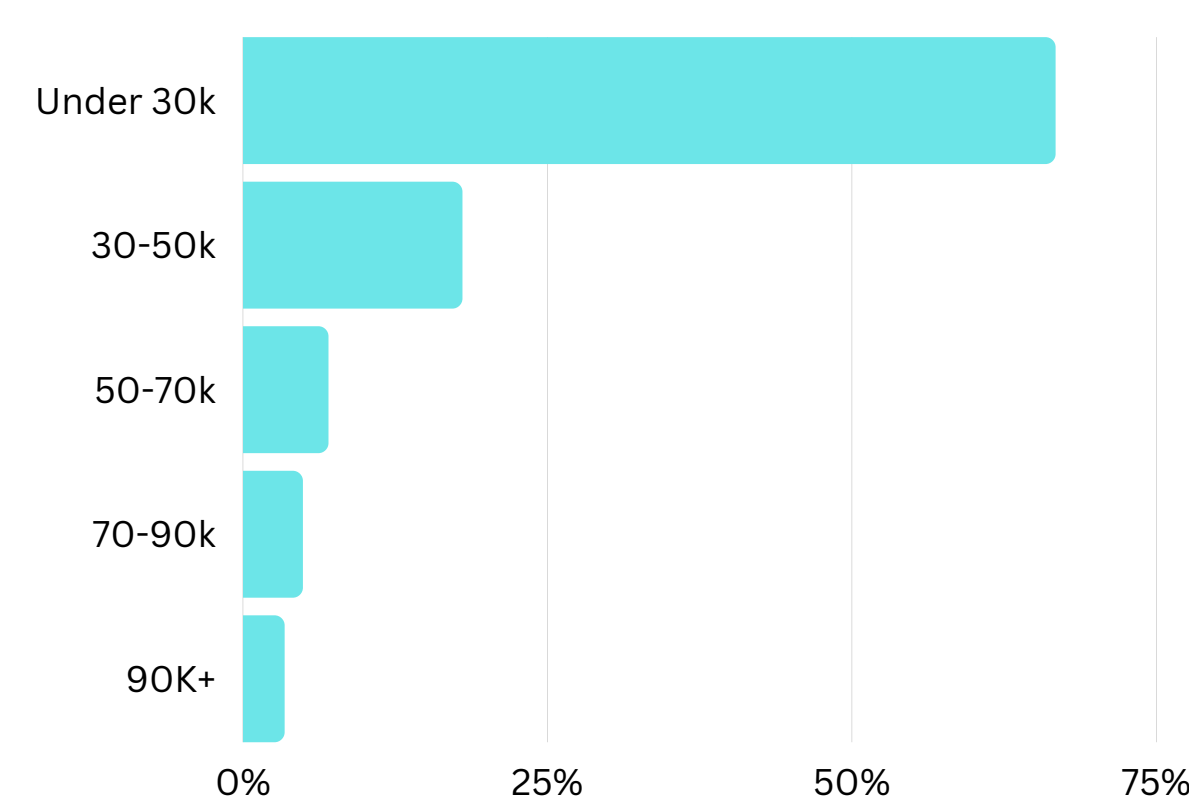
Ethnicity



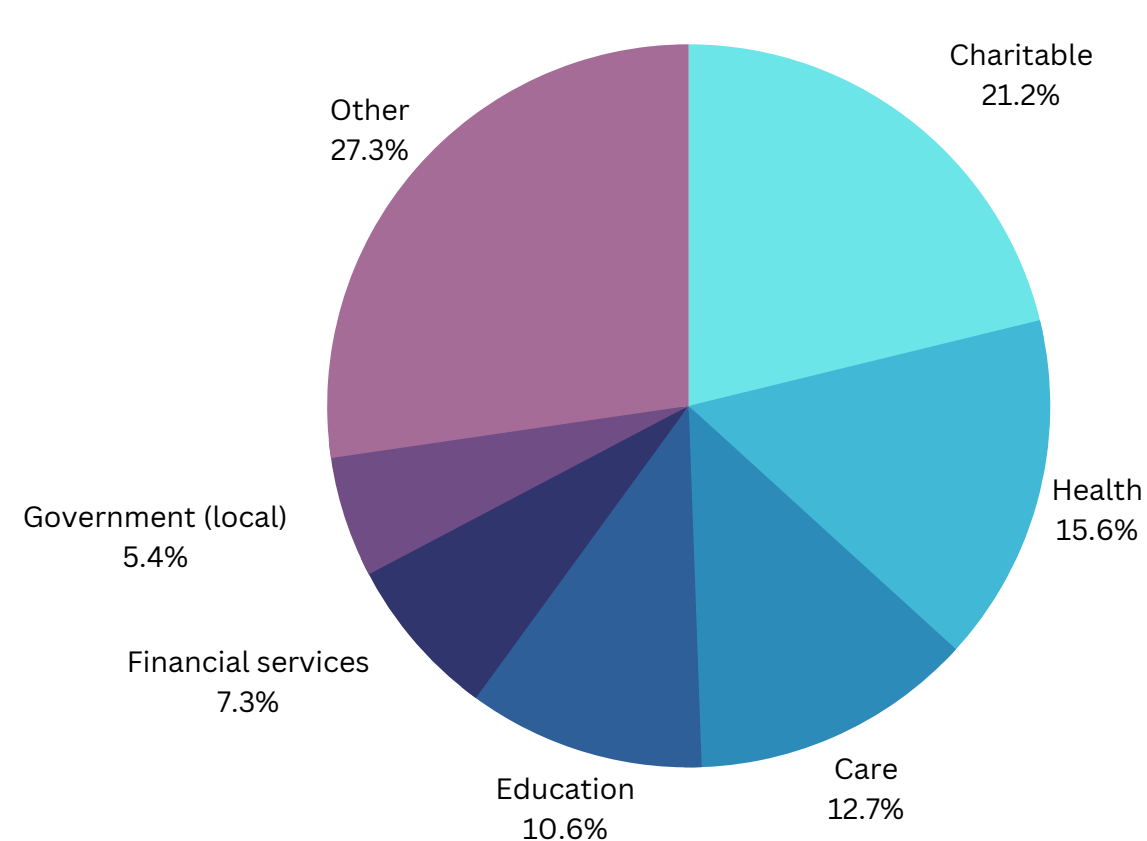
Do you consider yourself disabled?



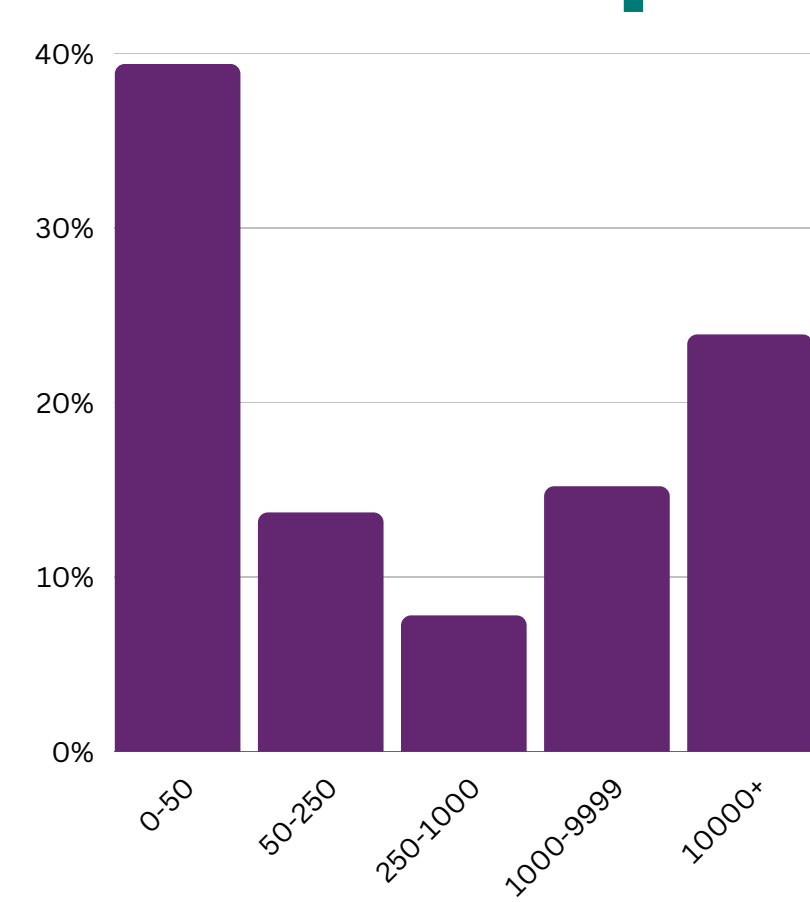
Annual Income



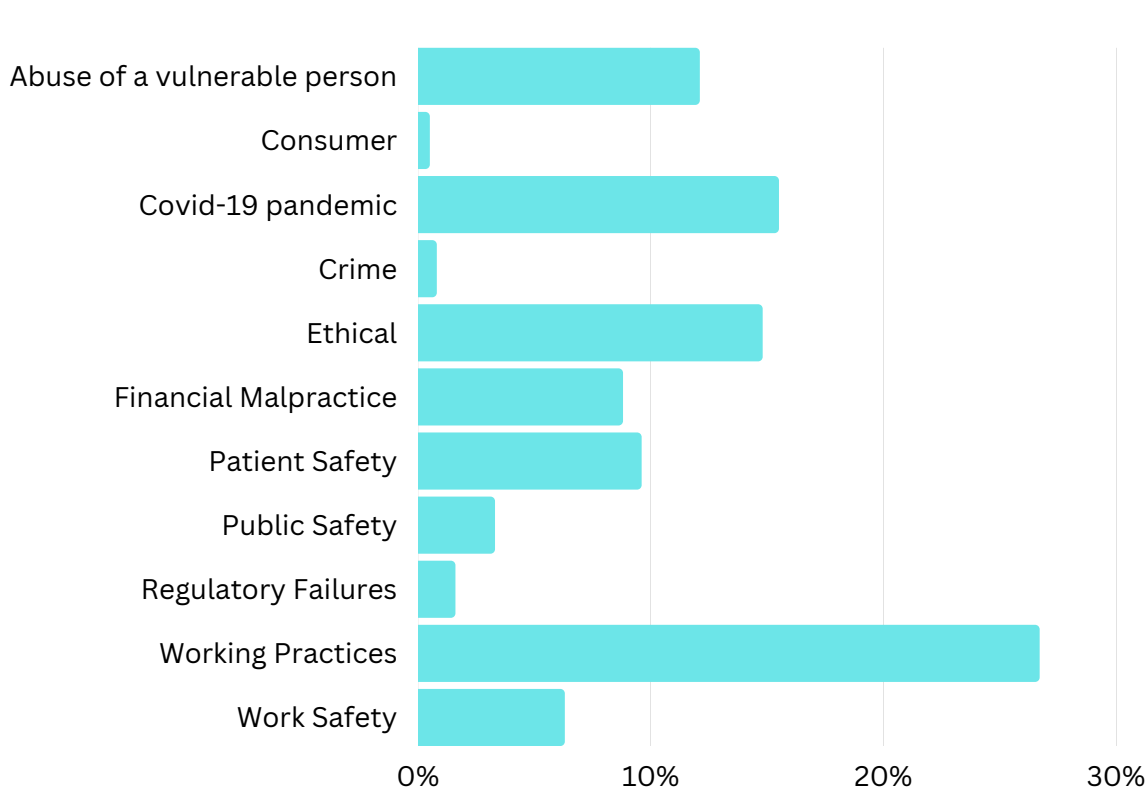
Sector



Organisation Size (by number of employees)



Concern Type



ADVICE LINE FEEDBACK

We started to record Advice Line feedback systematically and added an Advice Line feedback page to our website to help us continuously improve our service in 2021 and it was great to see continued positive feedback from whistleblowers .

We are **SUPPORTIVE**

"Without your support and guidance, I would be in an extremely dark place. Warm wishes and enormous gratitude to you and all the team at Protect who will have contributed by "solidarity and teamwork."

"I was broken into pieces when I called the adviceline"

"Protect are a godsend who have helped me to try and make sense of the whirlwind I find myself in."

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We are **EXPERT**

"Thank you so much, you're the first organisation that I came across that actually help people who blow the whistle. You're doing the right thing but you're alone and you don't know your rights. Had I spoken to you at the time, it would have things much easier."

"It's a really impressive level of advice you've given to me today, so thanks to you guys and the service you're giving"

We are **COLLABORATIVE**

"For the last week I've been going round in circles about whether I should raise these concerns, and it's been weighing on me, but speaking to you has reassured me I can do it and now I know where I can go – thank you"

"That advice was really helpful, you've given me a number of options and everything feels much clearer in my head now"

"You cut straight to the point and that's what I need. It informs me on how to move forward "

CASE STUDIES

CHARITY

Thomas (not his real name) has worked for a charity providing services for young people for six years. He called with concerns that the charity had committed furlough fraud - he was asked to agree to backdate documentation stating that he had been on furlough during a period when, in fact, he had been working. Thomas raised this issue with his manager who dismissed his concerns, refusing to engage over email but saying face-to-face that the charity were unlikely to be found out.

Thomas was seeking advice on how best to escalate his concerns. He had drafted a whistleblowing letter to send to senior management but was worried that they might receive it badly and he might be subjected to negative treatment for speaking up.

We advised Thomas that he could raise concerns regarding furlough fraud externally to the HMRC, without going to his employer first, if he felt that there was no one he could trust at work, he had raised concerns before and they had been ignored and/or where his employer was active in the wrongdoing he was seeking to flag. Thomas confirmed that there was no whistleblowing policy contact and no one he trusted at the charity.

We recommended talking to HMRC, on a confidential rather than an anonymous basis, as this way there would be a record of him raising concerns but his identity should be protected. It would also allow HMRC to get back in contact with him, should they need help with their investigation. We suggested that Thomas could tell HMRC that he feared push back from his employer and they should be able to conduct any investigation sensitively - as a ‘spot check’, for example- in order to better protect his identity.

Thomas was really reassured by the advice. He felt that going to HMRC would be a much better solution than his original plan and he was very grateful. If Thomas suffered any sort of negative treatment as a result of raising concerns, we suggested he get back in touch for further advice.

CONSTRUCTION

Robert (not his real name) was an accountant at a construction company. He was concerned that his employer was committing fraud. In particular, Robert believed his employer was processing personal transactions with company finances, creating fake employees on payroll records, and falsifying company invoices.

Robert raised these concerns with his manager. Unfortunately, his manager dismissed Robert’s concerns, and told him to turn a blind eye to his employer’s financial malpractice. Robert who did not feel comfortable with this outcome, considered leaving the company as a result. He then contacted Protect for advice.

As it appeared that Robert had exhausted all internal routes for raising his concerns, Protect advised Robert to raise them with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the relevant regulator.

Protect explained to Robert that if he left his employment and suffered any post-employment detriment linked to his disclosure to the Managing Director, he could potentially receive protection as a whistleblower under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

EDUCATION

Niamh (not her real name) was a teacher in a special needs school and had safeguarding concerns surrounding the behaviour of one of the other teachers at the school. Niamh witnessed a teacher showing her colleagues a sexually explicit image of one of the students. The same teacher also spoke inappropriately about her own sex life in front of another student.

Niamh raised her concerns internally and the teacher was suspended for several months. Once elapsed, the teacher returned to the school and resumed her position. Furthermore, Niamh was in fact disciplined by her employer for not having raised her concerns sooner.

Shortly thereafter, Niamh resigned because she did not wish to continue working alongside the other teacher. She wrote to the Education Authority, who reassured her that her concerns had been dealt with. Niamh was frustrated with the handling of her concerns, and believed that safeguarding issues would remain so long as the teacher remained at the school.

Niamh believed that by disciplining her, her employer had subjected her to negative treatment for raising her concerns. As she was not satisfied with the outcome of the Education Authority’s investigation, Niamh contacted Protect for advice on how to escalate the matter.

Protect advised Niamh to first approach the governors of the school with her concerns. Failing that, Niamh was advised to re-engage with the Education Authority and appeal their findings.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Protect supports almost 300 employer Members and we welcomed 25 organisations as Members in 2021. Our training was still remote due to the pandemic but over the year we renewed training courses and products. We introduced and successfully delivered three entirely new specialist Masterclasses – Investigations, Tackling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, and Tackling Whistleblower Victimisation.

We continue to receive exceptional feedback on our training with an average overall score and an average recommendation score of 9/10. Crucially, the average level of understanding jumps from 6/10 before a course, to 9/10 after the course.

Our flagship product our **Whistleblowing Benchmark** underwent a refresh to align it with the EU Whistleblowing Directive and in 2022 we will look to produce some anonymised insights and learnings from those that have completed the process. Every organisation that has completed the process has found the process to be invaluable.

We also introduced our employer Membership Forum, for Members to discuss challenges and share best practice which was an enormous success: in our first forum we discussed the value of the advice line and Protect Membership, preventing and dealing with victimisation, and effective communication of speak up arrangements, and we aim to continue this into 2022 on a regular basis.



BUSINESS SUPPORT

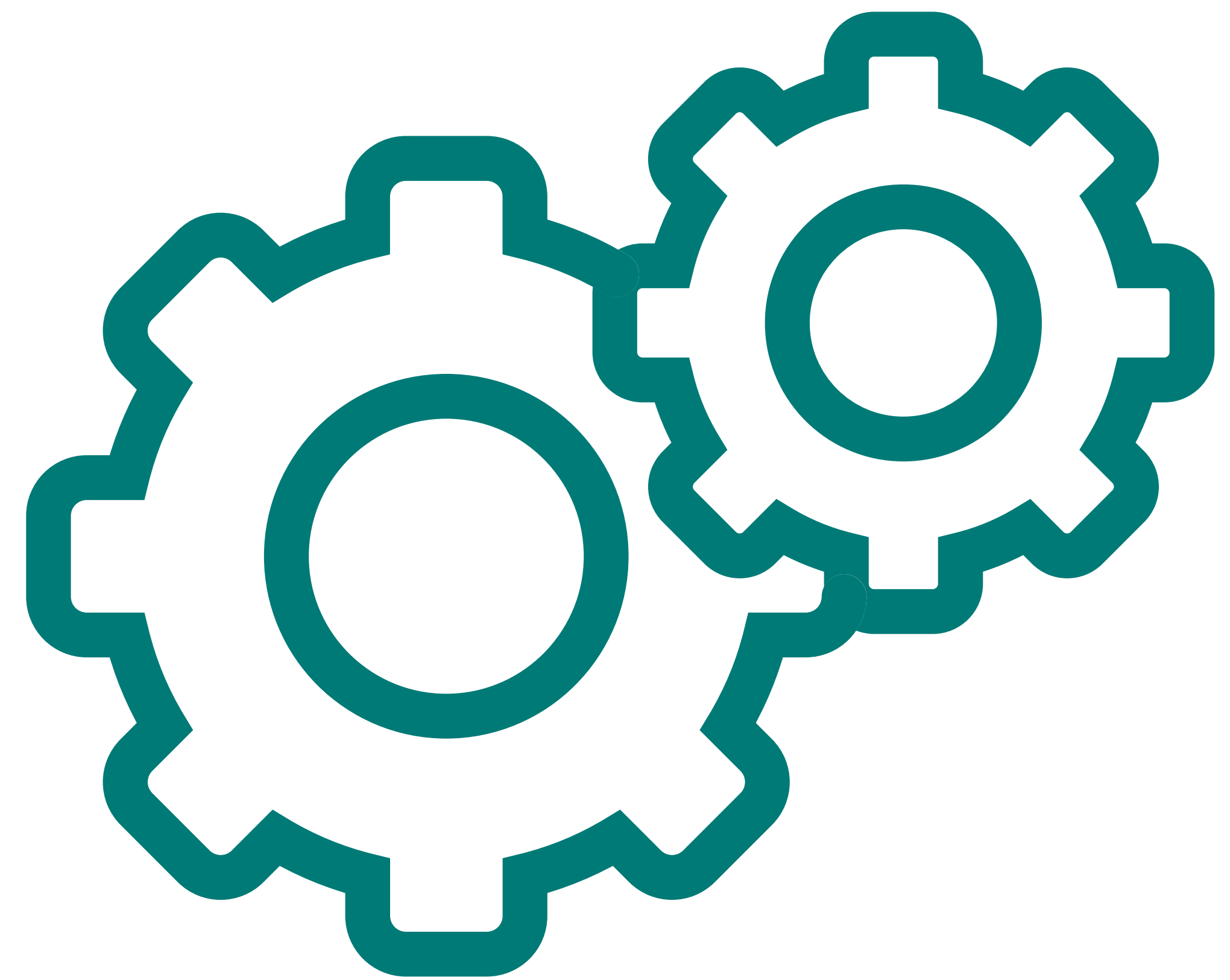
Our Business Support Team engages with all sectors, but over 2021 we made a concerted effort to engage with Food and FTSE 100 and 250 companies.

We teamed up with the Food Standards Agency to host a round table during National Food Safety Week (June 14-20) and welcomed Giles Chapman, Head of Analysis and Futures at the National Food Crime Unit which sits within the Food Standards Agency, to give an overview of the work of the National Food Crime Unit and its approach to food crime.

In June we also marked **World Whistleblower's Day** and partnered with Linklaters law firm to host a free webinar for employers to highlight the importance of caring for staff who whistleblow, as we all know speaking up is not an easy thing to do. This was well attended by almost 100 employers large and small.

Other webinars included an update on the **EU Whistleblowing Directive** and why it is important to UK employers, attended by over 100 delegates.

Overall in 2021, we had over 700 delegates attend 62 masterclasses and webinars.



CASE STUDIES

Charity Commission for England & Wales

The Charity Commission for England and Wales appointed Protect in 2019 to run an advice service for whistleblowers in the sector, to give confidential advice to callers and help them discuss their concern and position, and also highlight how to report to the Charity Commission if that is what the caller wants to do. Protect has seen an increased number of calls from charities in this time and it is now the number one sector calling their advice line.

Why did you choose Protect to provide its advice line service?

Whistleblowing disclosures to the Commission help us detect serious problems such as fraud, safeguarding concerns and mismanagement in charities. Developing a relationship with Protect as experts in the field was important for the Commission as we want to encourage more people to come forward with their concerns.

What do you value about Protect and our business support service to your organisation?

We value Protect's expertise.



CASE STUDIES

Why do you feel it's important for individuals to come forward as whistleblowers?

Charity workers and volunteers who may have witnessed wrong-doing within a charity may hold crucial information that can prevent future harm to beneficiaries and to the charity itself. Having a service where individuals can come forward in confidence to get the support they need to raise those concerns and then refer matters to the Commission as regulator is really important to us. The disclosures we receive from whistle-blowers help us detect and prevent concerns in charities, allowing us to investigate and protect beneficiaries, assets and maintain public trust and confidence in charities.

Can you explain why you value Protect's Advice Line, in comparison to e.g. a reporting line/hotline?

We know the decision to blow the whistle can be difficult for individuals because of the tension it creates over their loyalty to their organisation and their own livelihood and status. Callers to the advice line receive confidential advice to help them decide what to do about raising a serious concern about their charity and is part of improving the confidence of individuals when facing what can otherwise be an isolating and difficult decision to speak up. We believe the advice line has been a crucial part of increased reporting to the Commission by whistle-blowers in recent years.

Chris Sladen

Head of Proactive Casework, Charity Commission for England & Wales



CASE STUDIES

KPMG

Why did you choose Protect for business support services, and why are you a Member? Can you elaborate on how we have helped/continue to help?

We chose Protect for business support services and became a member of Protect for two reasons. Firstly, because we wanted Protect to help us understand how we could improve our speak up processes to become best in class. The second reason is that we think it's important for all firms to keep challenging themselves about whether or not they are doing everything possible to ensure their people feel truly safe and supported to speak up.

At KPMG we already have our own speak up hotline and an external ombudsman who oversees the reports that come into it – but being able to tell our people that we are also a member of Protect and that they can speak to Protect as a third party directly for impartial advice on speak up matters is a really important and visible part of being able reinforce our commitment to ensuring that they do have that safety that is so important.



CASE STUDIES

What do you value about Protect and our business support service to your organisation?

The fact protect is Independent, trusted and impartial.

Was there a particular corporate problem/public scandal which drew you to focus on your whistleblowing arrangements?

There wasn't a particular problem that we were looking to address. One of the questions we ask from time to time is what the 'right number' of speak up reports should be for a firm of our size and linked to that is whether or not people do feel safe to speak up. If you get too few reports for example this might be an indicator that people don't feel safe.

We know that you can't just assume that if you have a whistleblowing hotline and that you publicise it then your people will always speak up if they feel they need to – it's much more complex than that. We wanted advice from Protect to help us think about what more we could do to make it feel as safe as possible for people to use our speak up processes.



CASE STUDIES

Why do you feel it's important for your organisation to have robust whistleblowing arrangements?

I think it's important for all organisations to have robust whistleblowing arrangements. For our firm we need to be able to operate to the highest ethical and quality standards, act responsibly and in the public interest. Our whistleblowing arrangements are an important safety valve for us to have for people to use to report anything that is happening which might undermine this.

Can you explain why you value Protect's Advice Line, in comparison to e.g. a reporting line/hotline?

Because Protect is totally independent from our firm and will give our people confidential, impartial advice and support.

Amanda Morrison, Ethics Partner, KPMG LLP



CASE STUDIES

Nationwide

Why did you choose Protect for business support services, and why are you a Member? Can you elaborate on how we have helped/continue to help?

Protect provide firms such as Nationwide with an invaluable service in relation to support around our whistleblowing arrangements. They are (for Nationwide) our 'go to' team for advice and support and the guidance that they provide is always considered, accurate and professional.

What do you value about Protect and our business support service to your organisation?

Protect are on hand to support Nationwide in ensuring that their whistleblowing arrangements are of the required standard. They fulfil this role in a number of ways, from provision of Masterclass training (for Whistleblowers' Champions) through to use of their Benchmarking Assessment tool, allowing firms such as Nationwide to test the adequacy of their arrangements. 'Supportive' is definitely the value that resonates most with Nationwide.



CASE STUDIES

Was there a particular corporate problem/public scandal which drew you to focus on your whistleblowing arrangements?

Being a member of the Financial Services sector, having robust whistleblowing arrangements in place is a regulated activity and something that as a member-owned organisation we embrace fully.

Why do you feel it's important for your organisation to have robust whistleblowing arrangements?

Our employees are our greatest asset and to protect that position we need to protect them at every step. Stepping forward to report instances of unacceptable behaviour or wrongdoing within any organisation takes a great deal of courage.

On that basis, it is important that those who choose to report such matters feel that they can do so confidentially and anonymously (if they so wish) and in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with professionally and within the parameters of a set of robust principles.

It is equally important that the whistleblower feels supported through the entirety of their whistleblowing journey, whether that support is provided by the whistleblowing team or another organisation (such as Protect), who can offer them the necessary advice and a guiding hand.



CASE STUDIES

Can you explain why you value Protect's Advice Line, in comparison to eg a reporting/hotline?

Protect's Advice Line can provide potential whistleblowers with a professional source of advice and guidance before they decide to raise a matter internally. This often provides them with some reassurance and confidence that they are doing the right thing. There is little doubt that the Advice Line provides that added degree of assurance to whistleblowers who are unsure of what to do or who to report their concerns to.

Clive Robins, Senior Compliance Manager - Whistleblowing



PROTECT IN THE MEDIA

Over 2021 we continued to lead the conversation on whistleblowing and legal reform. Media outlets value our integrity and know Protect as a trusted and leading authority on whistleblowing. Our research and information are evidenced with data from our unique Advice Line. Our spokespeople understand whistleblowing legislation, through our work supporting whistleblowers day in, day out, as we have done for almost 30 years.

Over 2021 we featured in 40 high profile media outlets from The Daily Telegraph, BBC news, and provided case studies and research to Dispatches and File on 4 as well as featuring in trade press.

Blowing the whistle

NDA's have not been able to legally be used to prevent an employee from whistleblowing since the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The NHS standard contract also states NHS organisations should not use contractual terms which "prevent or inhibit...staff from speaking up about any concerns they may have in relation to the quality and/or safety of the care provided by their employer or by any other organisation".

NHS Employers guidance on settlement agreements, updated in February 2019, recommends inserting wording which expressly states raising issues such as safety concerns is not prevented under agreements. In 2012, then NHS chief executive Sir David Nicholson also wrote to all trust chief executives and HR directors, stating compromise agreements "should make clear the right to make a protected disclosure is not affected".

Andrew Pepper-Parsons, whistleblowing charity Protect's head of policy, said: "The threat of gagging orders in the NHS cannot be solved by declaring them 'outlawed'... The real underlying problem is that whistleblowers are often left confused when confronted by agreements with vague confidentiality terms."

He added that Protect's research indicated general public awareness of whistleblowing laws was low, so "in situations where whistleblowers need to escalate their concerns to a regulator, MPs or the media they can wrongly assume an NDA prevents them from raising it".

PERSONNEL TODAY

Whistleblowing protections to be reviewed amid dismissal claims

By Ashleigh Webber on 23 Mar 2021 In Coronavirus, Latest News, Discrimination, Dismissal, Employment tribunals, Whistleblowing



Shutterstock

The government will review whistleblowing protections amid a surge in employees who claim they were dismissed for speaking up about Covid-19 related issues.

Whistleblowing advice service Protect found that one in five whistleblowers who contacted its advice line were dismissed after raising coronavirus concerns in the first six months of the pandemic. This increased to one in four between September 2020 and March 2021.

According to analysis by the Telegraph, some 2,289 employment tribunal claims for whistleblowing detriment were made between April and December 2020 and the number of cases have more than doubled since 2014/15.

Protect is campaigning for reform of UK whistleblowing legislation, the Public Interest Disclosure Act, and wants to see an end to employers ignoring and victimising whistleblowers who highlight workplace wrongdoing.

Chief executive Liz Gardiner said: "The pandemic has exposed how, in reality, it is too easy to ignore whistleblowers, or worse, dismiss them for speaking out. There needs to be legal standards

Whistleblowing

'Office of the Whistleblower' needed to tackle retaliation

Covid-19 whistleblowers ignored and dismissed by employers

What is a public interest disclosure?

Government reviewing whistleblowing rules amid record pandemic sackings

One in four whistleblowers who have raised concerns about workplaces have been dismissed between September and March, according to research

By Mason Boycott-Owen

22 March 2021 • 8:06pm

FOR HEALTHCARE LEADERS
HSJ

Trusts spending £1m+ a year on settlement deals with gagging clauses

By Nick Kituno, Hayley Kirton | 1 November 2021

THANK YOU TO OUR LEGAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Protect collaborates with solicitors and barristers who together form our Legal Support Network. Over 2021 we were fortunate to receive support in varied ways from our growing Network which included helping us draft our Whistleblowing Bill and launch our legal reform campaign 'Let's Fix UK Whistleblowing Law', create and review content for our Advice web pages, co-delivering trainings to our employer members and helping whistleblowers calling our Advice line. Our Advisers were able to call on the Network and their expertise in complex areas of the law and helping with case work, for example, some pro bono support via our Legal Support Network resulted in a successful Interim Relief outcome for one whistleblower



Sybille Raphael, Head of Legal Advice



We are hugely indebted to our Legal Support Network which continues to grow, for their many and varied ways they support us. We are particularly grateful for their expert pro bono help on complex case work and some really fantastic web page content to support whistleblowers.

It has been really good to collaborate developing new courses with Gowling and CM Murray on our new specialised Investigations and Sexual Harassment courses. Our secondment exchange programmes were a mutual success and something we hope to continue. We would like to thank all our Legal Support Network.



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