



Proper conduct of public business

Value for money

Fraud and corruption

RAISE CONCERNS

STOP WRONGDOING

**Help ensure that public money, YOUR money,
is spent properly, lawfully and safely.**



Northern Ireland Audit Office

Do you have a concern about the misuse of public money or wrongdoing by a public body?

If so, then raising a concern can be an important step towards ensuring that potential issues are identified and addressed.



Who should you contact?

As a member of the public, your **first point of contact** should be the government department or public body to which your concern relates. Contact details should be available on each organisation's website.

However, if your concern is about:

**THE PROPER CONDUCT OF
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

VALUE FOR MONEY

FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

... in relation to central government, local government or health bodies, then an **alternative point of contact** is the **Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO)**.

The NIAO is the office of both the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland (C&AG) and the Local Government Auditor (LGA) and is **independent of government**.

Raising Concerns with the NIAO

How will the NIAO evaluate your concern?

If the issue you raise is within our remit, the NIAO will decide on the next steps based on:

- professional judgement;
- audit experience;
- whether there is a “public interest” element to the issue; and
- whether the concern indicates serious impropriety, irregularity or value for money issues.

The options for action can range from taking no further action, up to a full public report in the most serious cases. Other options include additional audit testing or referral to the relevant public body for investigation.

What can't the NIAO do?

- The C&AG and the LGA **do not have the power** to discipline public service officials nor are they able to bring criminal prosecutions against such individuals.
- Disciplinary action can only be taken by management and/or any relevant professional bodies.
- Allegations of criminality are usually investigated by the police and can ultimately only be decided by the courts.



Will you have legal protection?



Legislation is in place to provide a remedy to workers who raise concerns about wrongdoing at work. It allows them to take their employer to an employment tribunal if they are victimised in any way as a result of raising a concern.

As a member of the public, you have no employment relationship with the organisation about which you are raising a concern and so will not have, and will not need, this legal protection.

Will your identity be revealed?

When you raise a concern with the NIAO, it is preferable that you provide your name and contact details so that, if further action is proposed, we can contact you for further information, if required. The NIAO treats all concerns raised with the utmost confidentiality. It will not reveal your identity to another organisation without consulting you first.

The NIAO will accept anonymous concerns and will evaluate them as outlined above. However, it may be more difficult to pursue the concern if we are unable to contact you for further information, if required.

How do you contact the NIAO?

Email: raisingconcerns@niauditoffice.gov.uk

Telephone: 028 9025 1000

Address: NI Audit Office
106 University Street
Belfast BT7 1EU

If your concern is outside the remit of the NIAO,

we will aim to provide you with an alternative contact.