

<b>FOI REF:</b>	17041
<b>RESPONSE SENT:</b>	15/05/2025

## Request

Please provide the following information for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025:

1. Number of investigations conducted by external investigators For each year (2024 and 2025), please provide:

- The number of bullying, harassment, grievance, or conduct investigations carried out by external investigators
- The number of such investigations carried out by internal investigators (Only aggregated, non identifiable data is requested.)

2. Types of cases referred to external For each year, please provide:

- The categories of cases (e.g., bullying, harassment, grievance, conduct, whistleblowing) where external investigators were used
- The grade/pay band of the subject(s) of those cases (aggregated only)

3. Criteria for appointing an external investigator Please provide:

- Any policies, guidance, or internal documents that set out when an external investigator should be appointed
- Any criteria used to determine whether a case is suitable for external investigation
- Any thresholds relating to grade, seniority, conflict of interest, or complexity

4. Requests for external investigators For each year, please provide:

- The number of cases where an external investigator was requested (by HR, management, complainant, or union)
- The number of those requests that were approved
- The number that were refused
- Where recorded, the reasons for refusal (aggregated only)



5. Cost of external investigations For each year, please provide:

- Total cost of external investigators
- Average cost per investigation
- Highest and lowest cost recorded (No personal data or commercially sensitive pricing is requested.)

6. Independence and conflict of interest safeguards Please provide:

- Any policies or procedures relating to ensuring independence in investigations
- Any documents outlining how conflicts of interest are identified and managed
- Any internal audits or reviews relating to the use (or non use) of external investigators

Format requested: Please provide the information in spreadsheet, table, or document format.

## Response

During 2024, 2 external investigations were completed. Both investigations were reported direct by the complainants to the Director of Finance, and related to whistleblowing disclosures.

The investigations were commissioned by the Director of Finance in accordance with the council's Anti-corruption and Whistleblowing Procedure. The policy is available on our website: <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/about/strategies-policies-plans>

The total cost for the investigation was £15,000.

For the avoidance of doubt, no external investigations were undertaken in 2025.