



Beyond Governance  
Creating clarity, improving business

# How ethical is your business?

Top tips for getting started



## Review what you are already doing

- What are the common ethics challenges for your business?
- What are your greatest risks i.e. which employee groups, locations, business units are 'hot spots'?
- What values are most and least important to your business and also your employees? Do these create potential or actual problems?
- Do your pay structures promote the right behaviours?
- What are your legal obligations and how well do you meet them?  
It's usually the lower grade employees who notice the misconduct first but they don't tend to have a clear line of communication with someone that could address their concerns and they are not sure they'd be taken seriously.
- What processes and systems do you have in place to mitigate unethical behaviour and how ingrained are they in how you do business?
- How well are your systems/processes/policies implemented? Do your employees know what they are, how to raise concerns and what good looks like?

## Take action to address the problems

### 1. Create mechanisms to address the 'hot spots' and challenges for your business:

- Set clear processes/standards/policies and truly embed them in the business. Every business will need something slightly different but, in all cases, good implementation is essential and lip service will only promote the opposing behaviour.
- Consider introducing a code of ethics and a code of conduct.

#### What's the difference?

A code of ethics sets out the principles which influence the judgement and the code of conduct sets the guidelines that influence employee's actions

### 2. Be clear in your communications:

- It's usually the lower grade employees who notice the misconduct first but they don't have a clear line of communication with someone that could address their concerns and they not sure they'd be taken seriously.
- Clear consistent genuine messages from leadership is key.



**3. Carry out regular checks on your approach:**

- Are systems/processes/policies still working?
- How can they be improved?
- Would an external review be helpful?

**4. Take reports seriously:**

- For most employees it takes an immense amount of courage to report misconduct and if managers are not taking proper action employees will stop reporting it.
- Ensure the board (and audit committee, if you have one) is part of the reporting process. Independence and an object perspective is key.
- Who are reports made to? Consider the potential biases around this person, could they ever be the perpetrator? Would an external whistleblowing hotline work? If you already have one where are the poster located? The back of the toilet door is a great location!

Want to know more?

**Contact us now on +44 (0)20 3745 1916 to get specific advice on best practice for you and your company moving forward.**