

Speaking up: Reporting concerns to CIISA

Guide for individuals

What you can report, how we will handle it and what happens next

In immediate danger? CIISA is not an emergency service. Call 999 where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm. For urgent mental health support, call NHS 111. Samaritans is available free, 24 hours a day, on 116 123.

This guide explains how individuals can report a concern to the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority (CIISA).

It covers what you can report, what happens after you contact us, how we handle your information, what CIISA may be able to do - and what CIISA cannot do.

About CIISA

We are an independent standards body for the UK's creative industries. Through [the CIISA Standards](#), we set clear and consistent expectations for behaviour in creative industry workplaces and help individuals and organisations put the CIISA Standards into practice.

CIISA is also a 'prescribed person' under whistleblowing law in Great Britain¹. At present, this does not cover Northern Ireland, who have separate whistleblowing legislation and its own process for appointing Prescribed Persons.

CIISA can receive reports from those who work in the film, TV, music and theatre industries (including live performance) who want to speak up about concerns they have about behaviours at work relevant to the CIISA Standards.

Whistleblowing means speaking up about wrongdoing at work that could affect others or raise wider concerns about the workplace. It can relate to something that has happened, is happening now or is likely to happen.

Workers may choose to contact us because they do not feel able to speak up safely within their organisation, or because they believe their organisation has not addressed their concerns.

¹ Northern Ireland has separate whistleblowing legislation and its own process for appointing Prescribed Persons. CIISA is not currently a Prescribed Person in Northern Ireland.

A whistleblowing report may be protected by law when certain requirements are met. This means a worker may be protected from unfair treatment at work because they made the report to CIISA.

Whether a report qualifies for protection will depend on the circumstances and this guide explains the main requirements.

CIISA is not a statutory regulator. Being a prescribed person does not give us powers to compel people to give us information, to determine whether laws have been broken, impose sanctions or provide a remedy in an individual case.

Our aim is to provide a trusted, independent, confidential place for people to report so we can capture their experiences and use that to help us understand what is happening across the creative industries.

This helps us to identify important issues, themes and patterns, so we can then report on what we are seeing and recommend ways that organisations (and the wider creative industries) can address them.

We will also support people where possible by providing appropriate signposting and make lawful referrals where necessary.

Who can report to CIISA?

We receive reports from people who work (or have previously worked) in the film, TV, music and theatre sectors (including live performance).

Organisations can report concerns or share relevant information with CIISA too. This information is also crucial to help us monitor workplace issues, identify patterns, safeguard workers and improve workplace safety and culture.

Organisations do not receive the same protections that can apply to workers under whistleblowing law. However, the information they provide makes an important contribution to CIISA's work.

This guide covers reporting to CIISA **as an individual**. If you are representing an organisation and want to report something to CIISA, please refer to our **guide for organisations reporting to CIISA**.

What CIISA does and does not do:

We:	We do not:
✓ help individuals and organisations understand what they can report to us	⊗ act on or respond to every concern raised
✓ Acknowledge receipt of reports	
✓ consider when safeguarding action, support, signposting or a referral is needed in certain cases	⊗ resolve individual workplace disputes or act as an employer's HR service or appeals route

✓ use reports to identify emerging issues, patterns and trends	⊗ compel people to provide information or take enforcement action
✓ report on what we are seeing and recommend action	⊗ tell you whether your report will be legally protected under whistleblowing law
✓ protect the confidentiality of reports and reporting people wherever possible.	⊗ provide legal advice
	⊗ give detailed updates about every report we receive.

Why should I report to you?

Although we cannot provide a detailed response to every report, what you tell us matters.

Your input to our work is vital. By sharing your experience, you help bring to light issues that might otherwise go unseen. Your insight will help to shape how we can take action to strengthen workplaces and tackle harmful behaviour across the creative industries.

CIISA offers the best opportunity to identify and tackle patterns of harmful behaviour in the creative industries. This behaviour can take place across multiple projects, organisations, productions and even sectors, reflecting the freelance and project-based nature of so much creative work.

When we link reports together, they can help us build a detailed picture of what is happening in the creative industries. They can reveal patterns, issues and themes and what is needed to put these right. This will help us strengthen accountability and help build safer, fairer and more respectful creative industry workplaces.

1. BEFORE YOU REPORT

We know speaking out about concerns often feels daunting and complex.

You may have questions before you decide whether to report to us. This section answers many frequently asked questions you may have to help you make that decision.

If you have a question that is not covered below, please contact us at whistleblowing@ciisa.org.uk

What exactly can I report to you?

You can report concerns you have experienced (or witnessed) within working environments across the film, TV, music or theatre industries (including live performance) that may come under [the CIISA Standards](#). This could include things like:

- Harassment (including sexual harassment);
- Bullying and abusive behaviour;
- Discrimination;
- Victimisation or retaliation;
- Risks to health and safety;

- Working cultures or practices that go against what is in the CIISA Standards;
- Other concerns affecting workers which may raise wider issues within the creative industries.

Could reporting to you result in me being treated unfairly by my employer?

Whistleblowers in Great Britain may be protected by law if certain conditions are met. This could protect you from being treated unfairly at work because you raised a wider concern.

The main requirements are that:

- ✓ You fall under the definition of a worker;
- ✓ You reasonably believe that:
 - you are reporting a type of wrongdoing covered by whistleblowing law;
 - you are raising the concern as it covers wider issues/can affect other people;
 - the concern falls within CIISA's remit; and
 - the information you report is substantially true.

In any event, we keep your report secure and confidential.

Tell us if you are worried about being identified or treated unfairly. We will consider this when deciding what to do.

We will not share your personal information without speaking to you first. Sometimes we may need to share necessary information with an appropriate authority or specialist body where this is required by law or where there is another lawful, necessary and proportionate reason to do so, including to address a serious safeguarding or safety risk.

Would reporting to you affect any HR or legal process I am involved in, or might have access to?

Whistleblowing is very different from raising a grievance, going through a relevant HR process (such as disciplinary proceedings, redundancy or dismissal), going to an employment tribunal, or taking legal action.

Making a whistleblowing report to CIISA **will not**:

- ⊗ prevent or stop an employer or organisation from carrying out any relevant HR or legal process;
- ⊗ replace or substitute an HR grievance, appeals process, or a legal process; or
- ⊗ stop or pause any time limits you may have for raising a grievance, making a claim to a tribunal or to a court, or any other legal or regulatory time limits.

Please make sure you are aware of any relevant time limits or procedures that might be relevant to your circumstances.

I'm not sure if I should report to CIISA. Where can I get advice?

If you are unsure whether your concern is whistleblowing or want advice about raising it safely with CIISA (or anybody else), you can speak to Protect, who are an independent UK charity specialising in whistleblowing.

Protect provides free, confidential advice to people who are concerned about wrongdoing at work, including how to raise a concern safely and what legal protection may apply.

You can find out more at www.protect-advice.org.uk or by calling their Advice Line on 020 3117 2520.

I'm a freelancer. Am I covered by whistleblowing law?

Being called a freelancer or self-employed does not automatically mean that you are excluded. Protection depends on your actual working arrangements.

Under whistleblowing law, a worker is someone who personally carries out work for an organisation rather than running an independent business serving it as a client. This can include employees, agency workers and some freelancers.

Only an employment tribunal can make a final decision whether you can receive protections.

You do not have to consider these issues alone. You can get free, confidential advice from [Protect](#) about whether your working arrangements may impact on whether you can be protected in law.

Even if you are not legally protected, you can still report a concern to us.

What types of wrongdoing can I report?

Whistleblowing law covers the following types of wrongdoing:

Type	What this may include
Criminal offence	An act (or acts) that may be classed as a crime. Examples could include assault, sexual assault, stalking or serious threats.
Breach of a legal obligation	A person or organisation has failed to do something the law requires. This could include failing to protect workers' health and safety, unlawful discrimination, failing to make reasonable adjustments for a disabled worker or failing to follow legal safeguards.
Miscarriages of justice	Someone may have acted in a way that unfairly affects a legal process or its outcome. This could include hiding evidence from the police or a court, pressuring a witness to lie or deliberately giving false information in legal proceedings.
Danger to health or safety	Someone's physical or mental health may be at risk. This could include unsafe equipment, dangerous stunts, excessive working hours, unsafe locations or failing to deal with behaviour that creates a serious risk of harm.
Sexual harassment	Someone has experienced or witnessed unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. This could include sexual comments or messages, unwanted

	touching, sharing sexual images or offering work in return for sexual contact.
Damage to the environment	An organisation's activities may harm the environment. A concern that is only about environmental damage will not usually fall within CIISA's remit. Another organisation may be better placed to deal with it.
Covering up wrongdoing	Someone may be deliberately trying to hide one of the types of wrongdoing listed above. This could include deleting complaint records, changing safety reports, destroying evidence or pressuring people to stay silent.

Why does my concern have to cover a wider issue?

To receive protections, whistleblowing law states that you must reasonably believe that the issue(s) you are reporting covers issues that can have a wider impact (for example, because it could affect other people, involves serious or repeated wrongdoing, puts workers at risk or points to a wider workplace problem). This is also known as being in the 'public interest'.

Something that happened to you personally can still be whistleblowing if it also raises a wider concern. However, an issue that affects only you is more likely to be a personal workplace complaint or grievance and may not be considered as whistleblowing.

I do not think my concerns will be protected. Can I still report it?

Yes. You can still report a concern that is relevant to the CIISA Standards, even if it may not be protected by whistleblowing law.

We can analyse your information alongside other reports to identify issues, patterns and trends. If we use it in published insight, we will take steps to remove or combine identifying details to protect the people involved.

Can I make an anonymous report to you?

Yes. You do not have to give us your name or contact details, and we will take anonymous reports seriously.

If we cannot contact you, it may be harder for us to ask any questions, check details or get a full understanding of your concern. Providing as much information as possible will help us to know how best to use your report for our insight.

I'm worried somebody will ask for a copy of my report, what will happen?

We take your privacy and your confidence seriously. We will not give someone a copy of your report simply because they ask for it.

If somebody asks us for what personal information we hold about them (known as a subject access request), this only gives someone the right to receive their own personal information, not an automatic right to receive the whole report.

Making a subject access request does not automatically entitle someone to know who made the report or to receive information that identifies you. We assess every request individually and will protect information about you and other people wherever the law allows.

You can find more information in our [Privacy Notice](#). You can also contact dpo@ciisa.org.uk.

2. MAKING A REPORT

How can I submit a report to you?

You can:

- ✓ Use CIISA's secure online reporting service [via our website](#)
- ✓ Email whistleblowing@ciisa.org.uk

What information do you need from me?

Please give us as much clear and specific information as you can, including:

- ✓ what happened and when;
- ✓ the people, organisation, production or project involved;
- ✓ whether you experienced the events yourself or heard about them from someone else;
- ✓ whether anyone else may have relevant information; and
- ✓ details of any documents, messages, recordings or other supporting information.

You do not need to have evidence before reporting to us. **Do not put yourself or anyone else at risk** or try to obtain information you would not normally be entitled to access.

What you may want to report may be sensitive or distressing. **Share only what you feel able to.** We will listen without judgment, explain what happens next and give you choice and control wherever possible.

You can also tell us if you need any support or adjustments and we will look at whether we can recommend or identify any support that can help.

Please tell us if you have anything that may be legally privileged, subject to a court restriction or may be particularly sensitive or confidential before sending it. You can contact us via whistleblowing@ciisa.org.uk

I would like to get further support, can CIISA help?

We can help you find organisations that understand the particular challenges of working in the creative industries. This may include confidential workplace advice, mental health support, trade-union representation, financial assistance or support from a professional network or membership group.

Wherever possible, we will speak to you about your options and help you access further support.

Our online directory sets out a range of support that are available across the Film/TV, Music and Theatre sectors. We will update this directory regularly.

3. OUR PROCESS

What happens when I submit a report?

We will consider everything carefully, assess your report and consider how it can contribute to our understanding of issues across the creative industries. We take every report seriously.

We handle reports via the following steps:

Acknowledgement	We will confirm that we have received your report and explain what happens next. We will also provide information about privacy and available support.
Initial review	We aim to review new reports within 10 working days of receiving them. We consider whether the issues raised fall within our remit and whether it may involve whistleblowing, safeguarding or a wider public interest. Any immediate risk of serious harm will be considered without delay.
Assessment	We identify the main concerns, consider the information or evidence available and decide whether we need to ask you for anything further (where this is possible). We may also consider whether the information can be checked or supported by other sources.
Risk assessment	We consider any risks to you or other people. These may include whether there are any concerns about your (or others) welfare and whether the issues raised require us to escalate how we handle the case. At this stage we will look at whether there is a need for us to signpost to support services or refer the matter to the authorities or a relevant regulator where we have a legal requirement to do so.
Privacy Assessment	We protect personal information throughout our process. We consider who could be identified, whether sensitive information is involved and what safeguards are needed before information is used or shared.
Insight assessment	We consider whether the report reveals a new issue or adds to a theme, pattern or trend we are already seeing. Our level of confidence in the information helps us decide how it can be used; it is not a decision about whether an allegation is true or false.
Decision and review	We decide what should happen next. This may include recording and monitoring the concern, asking for more

	information, providing support or signposting, or considering an external referral or other action.
	Another senior member of staff reviews the decision to support fairness and consistency.
We aim to complete our initial assessment within one month of receiving your report. It may take longer if the report is complex or we need further information.	

Will you tell me what is happening with my report?

We will confirm that we have received your report. If you provide contact details, we may contact you if we need more information.

We cannot respond to or act on every individual report, so we may not provide further updates or tell you how the information has been used. However, every relevant report can help us identify wider issues, patterns and trends across the creative industries.

We may use information from your report as part of combined and/or anonymised insight without contacting you again.

If we think we would need to talk more about your experience in our insight reporting (for example, as a case study or quotation) we will contact you to explain how we propose to use it and what steps we will take to protect your identity.

We will not publish information in our insight reporting that could reasonably identify you without discussing this with you first.

What happens in urgent or serious cases?

If a report suggests that someone may be at immediate risk of death, serious injury or harm, we will assess and escalate the concern without delay. This may include contacting the emergency services, a safeguarding authority or another appropriate organisation where it is necessary and lawful to do so.

Other cases will be handled according to the level and nature of the risks identified. We may review our assessment if we receive new information or circumstances change.

Our risk assessment helps us make consistent decisions, but it is not applied mechanically. We consider the circumstances of each case and use our professional judgment in each case.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, **call 999**. Do not wait for CIISA to assess your report.

Will you contact my employer or others about my report?

We are not able to intervene on specific cases unless there is a clear legal reason to do so, or where we need to get further information or context about what has happened.

We will not normally contact your employer (or the organisation, production or project you have been working with), a witness or another person about your report without first discussing this with you.

Before making contact, we will consider whether it could identify you or others, and whether that would result in retaliation or cause some other harm.

We will also consider confidentiality, data protection and whether there is a lawful and proportionate reason for the contact.

In limited circumstances, we may need to share information without your agreement (for example, where required by law or where this is necessary and proportionate to address an immediate risk of serious harm).

Can I correct, update or ask you to delete my report?

Yes. If you want to provide new information or want to amend or clarify something, please contact us and we will accommodate.

You can also ask us to amend or delete personal information. We will consider your request under data-protection law and our retention requirements.

We may sometimes need to keep certain information (for example, to maintain an accurate record or protect the rights of those involved).

Our [Privacy Notice](#) explains this in more detail.

4. How we use the information you give

What we do will depend on a number of factors, such as whether the report falls within our remit, whether we need to act urgently, what information we have available, any privacy considerations, and what we can lawfully and proportionately do.

We may:

- **Record and monitor:** we decide to treat the report as a new issue - or link it to an existing issue, pattern or trend - and actively monitor what it tells us against existing and incoming reports.
- **Record and keep for internal reference:** we decide to record the information and retain it for future insight, this is useful in case we have future reports that, when linked to your report, begins to tell us that there is a potential emerging issue, pattern or trend.
- **Ask for more information:** If you have provided us with contact details, and are happy for us to contact you, we may ask you follow-up questions or ask for any evidence or other information, where possible and appropriate.

- **Provide support or signposting:** in serious and complex cases, where we can see there is more we can do to support you, we may direct you to a specialist support organisation that may be able to help.
- **Refer information externally:** We may share necessary information with an appropriate authority or specialist body where this is required by law or where there is another lawful, necessary and proportionate reason to do so, including to address a serious safeguarding or safety risk.
- **Take no further action on the individual report:** This may happen where the concern is outside our remit or where the information provided is too limited for us to assess or act on (for example, because it does not identify when or where the events occurred and no further information is available). The report may still contribute to our wider understanding if similar concerns are reported later.

Safeguarding

If a report raises a possible safeguarding concern involving a child or an adult at risk, we will promptly consider whether safeguarding action or a referral is needed.

A child may report directly or with appropriate support. We will consider their age, understanding, wishes and circumstances, including whether involving a proposed representative could place them at greater risk.

How do you decide whether information in a report contains important insight?

We do that by looking at two factors: insight confidence and significance.

Insight confidence

We assess how much confidence we can currently place in our understanding of the information. We consider:

- how clear, detailed and specific the report is;
- whether the important details are reasonably consistent;
- the relevance and reliability of any supporting information; and
- whether information could be checked against other reports or sources;

We may rate our current confidence as high, medium, low or undetermined. The rating is provisional and may change if we receive new information.

Our confidence rating is not a decision about whether the information in a report is true or false, or about the reporting person's honesty or motives.

Anonymous reports can provide valuable insight and anonymity will not, by itself, reduce confidence. A report will not be given a low rating simply because supporting documents or independent confirmation are not available.

Insight significance

Insight significance means how much the information may contribute to our wider understanding of how the CIISA Standards are being embedded in the creative industries.

We consider whether the report:

- raises a new issue;
- supports, adds to - or challenges - an issue we are already seeing;
- may indicate an emerging or established pattern or trend;
- has wider organisational, sector or strategic importance; or
- relates to relevant research or information from other organisations.

We may assess its current significance as high, medium, low or undetermined. As with insight confidence, this may change as we receive other reports or information.

We may consider that a report may be potentially significant even where information is currently limited. Equally, we may consider that a serious individual experience may have limited wider significance.

5. How we use insight

Our approach to generating and reporting on insight is based on building an evidence-led picture of how the CIISA Standards are being applied in working environments across the creative industries. We look to identify issues, patterns, risks and opportunities for improvement, not to publish identifiable allegations about named people or organisations.

We do this via four main stages:

Classify every report	We turn reports into structured insight by using a consistent way of recording data. This includes things like: - What sector or subsector is involved - Types of organisations, productions or projects - What key issues are being reported and how they are relevant to the CIISA Standards. - How we can use the report without identifying individuals or organisations
Identify and monitor patterns	We separate insight confidence and significance on each report so we can understand how well CIISA currently understands the issues, alongside how much the information could contribute to CIISA's wider work.
Build an evidence-led picture	We combine relevant reports and use our confidence and significance assessments to decide what should be prioritised, monitored or placed on an Insight Watchlist.
Report on what we are seeing	We consider whether the combined evidence is strong enough to report responsibly. We assess identification risks, seek appropriate approval and, where needed, obtain legal advice. We present findings fairly and focus on learning and improvement.

How will you protect named people and organisations when deciding whether to publish?

Our insight reports are designed to report on wider themes, patterns and trends using our analysis of information. We will not identify people or organisations in our public insight reports unless there is a lawful and justified reason to do so. We will anonymise or combine information to reduce the risk of identification.

In limited circumstances, we may have to disclose information confidentially where required by law or where this is necessary and proportionate to protect someone from serious harm. This is different from publishing information in our insight reports.

6. Your personal information

For more information about our approach to privacy and confidentiality, the [CIISA Privacy Notice](#).

How do you protect my personal information when I report?

Access is restricted to authorised staff and approved service providers or professional advisers who have a legitimate need to know. We keep information secure and only collect, retain, use or share what is necessary for our work.

Before using or sharing personal information, we consider whether we have a lawful reason to do so. Additional safeguards apply to particularly sensitive information, such as information about someone's health, ethnicity, sexual orientation or alleged criminal conduct.

We also consider how long information should be kept, whether anyone could be identified and any wishes you have expressed about confidentiality. Information being publicly available does not automatically mean that we can reuse it for another purpose.

For every report, we consider:

- what personal or sensitive information it contains;
- whether you or anyone else could be identified directly or from a combination of details;
- any request for anonymity or restricted disclosure;
- whether linking the report with other information could reveal someone's identity;
- what information is necessary for our work;
- whether information can be removed, separated, redacted, anonymised or pseudonymised; and
- whether there is a lawful reason to use or share it.

Depending on the risks, we may apply our standard security controls, introduce additional safeguards or carry out a more detailed data-protection impact assessment before a proposed use of the information.

The privacy assessment may mean that information is used only internally, included only in an anonymised or aggregated form, or not used in any outward reporting.

Information being relevant or significant does not override our privacy and data-protection responsibilities.

7. Further information

If you have an enquiry about reporting to CIISA, email us at whistleblowing@ciisa.org.uk.

You can find more information about whistleblowing and your rights by visiting Protect [Protect | Speak Up, Stop Harm](#)

Government guidance on Whistleblowing and prescribed persons can be found on the Gov.UK website: [Whistleblowing for employees: What is a whistleblower - GOV.UK](#)

About this guide

This is a public summary of CIISA's procedural framework. This guide is not legal advice.

Information accurate as of September 2026