

Covid Crisis Special Report 8
The Link Between Whistleblowing and Detriment

By Eileen Chubb©

Since our previous Covid Crisis Report we have received the following new cases related to Covid Issues,

Residential Care Staff	11
Nursing Home Staff	5
Care Agency staff	2

Since the start of the Covid Crisis we have received in total,

Residential Care Staff	147
Nursing Home Staff	64
Care Agency Staff	35

Total	246
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This report deals with the repercussions of losing trust in an employer. We have always recognised loss of trust as a real detriment to a whistle-blower and that is why it is included in our evidence for Edna's Law.

Covid 19 has intensified this issue and clearly demonstrated the corrosive harm that ensues when an employer fails to act on genuine concerns.

From a total of **246** staff

6 staff have been sacked for reasons that include, alleged breach of confidentiality or excessive sick leave.

37 Staff have been working in hostile conditions since whistleblowing and felt forced to leave.

17 Staff on Zero hours contracts have not been given further shifts since whistleblowing.

39 Staff are intending to leave their employment in the near future, of which 21 intend not to work in care again.

99 Staff out of a total of 246 have already or will in the near future lose their job as direct result of raising concerns.

We do expect these numbers to rise in the coming weeks due to a **further 76** staff experiencing some form of harassment or adverse treatment as a result of whistleblowing.

From an overall total of 246 cases, 175 have reported harassment and/or adverse treatment since whistleblowing.

Due to the concentration of cases to our helpline we have observed a clear pattern, Those whistle-blowers who have reported the more serious concerns are much more likely to suffer a greater degree of harassment and detriment after whistleblowing.

I have observed that from the overall numbers that those Whistleblowers who have raised concerns that could be attributed to being beyond the providers control, for example an inability to obtain PPE due to **genuine** financial hardship or shortages of supplies, the **less likely** the whistle-blower is to suffer detriment. Whilst those whistle-blowers who are raising **indefensible** issues are **more** likely to suffer extensive detriment.

There is a clear link between the level of detriment suffered and the seriousness of the whistleblowing issues reported.

Some Examples of Adverse Treatment Reported.

Whistleblowers have had counter allegations made against them by the individual/individuals they raised concerns about.

Suffering isolation, being sent to Coventry or treated in a hostile manner.

Verbal abuse and threats.

Frustration that valid concerns are not acted on.

An increased sense of vulnerability as time goes on.

Not being included in team meetings or handovers.

Unfair criticism of their work.

Incorrect wages paid,

Voices From The Front Line.

The following are all from different members of staff and all have been anonymised. **Please note** none of the below examples are isolated incidents but are all indicative of the harassment suffered on every shift **after** whistleblowing.

"I really thought something would be done, people are dead for gods sake, I just keep going over and over

it, how have they got away with this? The other staff are really frightened, we all know the management are untouchable no matter what they do. It's a really bad place to be working in, I can't take much more of this, I feel like I will have a breakdown if I stay here any longer"

"They have this whistleblowing policy telling you to report things and what will happen when you do, it's not worth shit, what happens when you speak out? is you have to get out"

"I am crying my heart out every day, I feel so gutted by all this, they have done nothing about it, they have just got away with it. This job is just not worth the stress, its not worth making yourself sick over"

"I went up to the office as usual and the manager waited until I was nearly at the office door and stood and was really glaring at me, she slammed the door shut in my face, I was really upset, I knew I could not stay there working"

"It's not one incident or one big thing that happens, its all the small things put together, the dirty looks, them not speaking to me"

"I knew I could not stand it any longer, everything I did was wrong, I was really scared to go in there"

"I went to the staff room to have my break and the other unit manager was there, get out of here you, there's no room in here for bloody traitors, I went and sat outside on the bench, it was raining, when I got home I knew I could not face going back"

"The person I reported about the PPE has now made allegations against me, its all lies but who will they believe, me the care worker or the home manager?"

She said I would be sorry and now this will follow me around”

“After I reported what had happened, I went in to work and the manager knew it was me, she came straight up to and said, two can play at that game. She has made up a pack of lies about me and I keep saying she is only doing this because I reported her but no one at head office believes me”

“I really am not happy working there, I feel exposed, the manager who I reported is being so aggressive to me, she said I was a lying bitch and that I would be sorry, she has all the power and I have none, she is making my job hell”

“I thought it would ok if you reported this because it was such a bad thing they did, people could have died, I must have been really stupid because it’s a nightmare now, I don’t think I can even last long enough to work my notice”

“Its really hostile now, they give me dirty looks and I feel threatened being here. I told HR what kind of things were happening and I said they don’t speak to me at all, the women in HR just did not want to know, she said what do you expect us to do about that? we cant order people to speak to you”

“I didn’t think I had done anything wrong when I did the whistleblowing, but it certainly feels like I did something wrong. Its awful the atmosphere all the time, I knew it would not be long before I was the one targeted and now, they have made up a pile of rubbish about me”

“I am leaving as soon as I can, I really loved this job, I really felt I was making a difference to people I cared for, but now all I feel is, how soon can I get out of here? The shifts used to go so fast and I enjoyed being there but now all I do is look at the clock and count the minutes to going home. I love

the people in there, but the management have made my life hell and all because I blew the whistle”

“ You would think I did something dreadful reporting what happened, what they were doing, but it’s me that’s treated like the criminal, if that’s what happens for caring and doing the right thing then I need to go and work somewhere where the job doesn’t need you to care, its caring that gets you in trouble”

“I had my regular clients each shift, but now I have been given a different list, the clients are miles apart and its really hard. When I got to someone’s house at midday they were still in bed and were so thirsty, I rang the office said this lady needed to be on a different list, xxx was so aggressive, are you going to whistle blow on this now too? If you don’t like the list, we have given you, then you know what to do. I can’t do this, I was trying to make things better but this client is being neglected, its being done to get at me, how sick is that?”

“If I tried to explain it to someone who wasn’t there in the home and did not see all the things going on, they would not understand. The manager hardly ever speaks to me, they just glare at me, on xxx she said to me, what are you going to whinge about next? I blew the whistle that’s not whinging but what’s the point of trying to stick this out? “

“It sounds like nothing when you try to explain it but its really bad, an atmosphere you could cut with a knife it really gets you down, not at first but after a couple of weeks of it I was going home and crying my eyes out all the time”

“I had no idea how hard it would be working in this bad atmosphere, you realise they will be making up stuff about you, they’re the ones who will be believed, there the management”

“They keep saying we are taking action but the people responsible are still there, they are getting away with what they did and now they’re getting away with making my life a misery, there is only one person being punished and its me for speaking out, speaking out is not acceptable but putting peoples lives at risk that’s not a problem at all it seems”

“Nothing has been done about it at all, I saw the manager and the person who was supposed to be investigating them just sitting and chatting and laughing together. I am leaving, I have handed in my notice, the manager just looked at me and said, good”

“I don’t regret blowing the whistle because it had to be done, but I am sorry to leave the residents who I really love. When the Covid thing all started I felt really ill one day so did not go into work for two days because I was worried it was Covid, but it was ok, they disciplined me for taking time off sick for being careful. It’s too risky staying here I know I am a target now”

“Every time I see the manager, she picks on something I am doing, says that’s not being done right. The other staff keep saying to me, that’s not fair, it’s not right what she is doing. Everyone is really frightened; the atmosphere is really bad. The manager has got away with everything”

“It’s not a job anymore it’s a torment. I feel so depressed, I just keep crying all the time. My family keep saying get out of there before they finish you off. I am afraid to go in there. I feel like there is no choice but leave, I keep thinking about going to work somewhere else, what would happen if I saw anything wrong again? “

“I can’t believe that people could die like that and no one would do anything about it. All they care about is covering this up. Those people are dead, how can that be ok? I can’t do this work anymore not now,

*not knowing they could let all those people suffer
and die and it's supposed to be nothing important. I
just can't go along with it"*