

By email and tweet

Ed Davey
Leader of the Liberal Democrats
MP for Kingston and Surbiton

24 July 2026

Dear Mr Davey,

Concerns about the private company WhistleblowersUK, its Bill, proposed Office of the Whistleblower and monetisation of UK whistleblowing

I am an NHS whistleblower who has for some years now tracked and collated data on whistleblowing matters, [including the need for reform of UK whistleblowing law](#) and governance.

I write because I see that you spoke in the Commons debate 14 July 2026 on the Hillsborough Law and in this debate you brought up the [introduction of an independent Office to protect whistleblowers](#).

“That is an issue the Liberal Democrat party has raised and we want to work cross-party with the Government to ensure that we set up an independent office for whistleblowers, so that people come forward to expose scandals and ensure justice happens more quickly.”

I also write as I see that the [private company WhistleblowersUK](#) claimed on its website that you contributed to one of its recent events:



The screenshot shows the WhistleblowersUK website. At the top is a navigation bar with links: Home, About, Services, Media, WAM, Contact, and a red 'Join' button. Social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube are also present. Below the navigation bar is a 'News' section with the headline 'Sir Ed Davey Stands With Whistleblowers'. The article is attributed to 'By WhistleblowersUK' and dated '16 June 2026', with a '1 min read' indicator. Below the headline is a video player showing Sir Ed Davey speaking. The video has a progress bar at 0:00 / 1:28 and a caption that reads 'June 16th marks the start'. Below the video player, there is a short paragraph of text: 'WhistleblowersUK welcomes Sir Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, sharing a message for Whistleblowers Awareness Month 2026. Whistleblowers Awareness Month is an opportunity to recognise the importance of speaking up, protecting those who raise concerns, and building a culture where truth, transparency and accountability are valued. We are grateful to all those who support greater awareness of whistleblowing and the need for stronger protections for people who speak up in the public interest.'

Related to this, Whistleblowers tweeted [a video of you making a brief statement](#):

“June the 16th marks the start of Whistleblowing Awareness Month, brought together for the fourth year, by WhistleblowersUK. This year it couldn’t matter more. Whistleblowers are not troublemakers. They are the people who tell the truth. When powerful institutions want silence – Hillsborough, Horizon, and the Infected Blood scandal to name just a few – every single one was eventually exposed that someone was brave enough to speak up. And every single one where that happened paid a devastating personal price. We lose over £150 billion a year to fraud and corruption and as AI reshapes our world, the risks of unchecked wrongdoing only grow. The Liberal Democrats are committed to change. That’s why we support creating an Office of the Whistleblower, an independent body with real teeth. It will provide a safe space to raise concerns. It will have statutory powers to investigate wrongdoing. It will hold the powerful to account and be a genuine champion for whistleblowers and the public interest. Other countries have done this. It’s time Britain did too. This June stand with me and support whistleblowers. One day, you might need them.”

Further, I write to you in your capacity as leader of the Liberal Democrats because of the activities of some Lib Dem MPs in connection with the company WhistleblowersUK.

Monetisation of UK whistleblowing

Along with a number of other whistleblowers and some researchers, I have had concerns about proposals to mainstream a US model of bounty hunting in the UK, driven by powerful US bounty hunting law firms. Alongside this, I have had concerns about the activities of WhistleblowersUK, [which has for years advocated for financial rewards for UK whistleblowers](#).

The company has sometimes explicitly called for financial rewards. At other times it has used softened and/or euphemistic language and used terms such as “compensation” or “restitution” but in contexts where it has been clear that these terms mean rewards, incentives and bounties.

At least one of WhistleblowersUK’s reports which extolled the advantages of financial rewards, and the monetisation of whistleblowing, was written with the input of two prominent US bounty hunting law firms. These are parties which have a clear and substantial financial interest in the introduction of the model in the UK. The involvement of these firms in the report’s production was explicitly acknowledged in the body of WhistleblowersUK’s report. A founding partner and a senior partner from these US law firms were listed at the end of the 2023 report as [authors of the report](#).

[Moreover, WhistleblowersUK has otherwise worked with US bounty hunting law firms and was paid by these law firms to act as the external secretariat for the now defunct Whistleblowing APPG,](#) formerly chaired by your colleague Baroness Kramer.

WhistleblowersUK has campaigned vociferously for an Office of the Whistleblower, which is the namesake of the US body which runs the whistleblower reward programme for the US

Securities and Exchange Commission. It is my belief that WhistleblowersUK and its partners' ultimate aim is to introduce a similar programme to the UK. The programme is the basis of a multi-billion dollar industry in the US, which has seen a degree of [regulatory corruption as a result of the vast sums involved](#).

The programme only helps a small proportion of informants whose disclosures recoup funds over a given threshold, whether they are true whistleblowers or criminal informants. One article by the financial press which celebrated the ["whistleblower winners circle"](#) and reported on WhistleblowersUK's activities, also cited the case of an individual who had made billions using US bounty hunting legislation who had himself previously been convicted of Medicare and tax fraud (false billing).

[It is possible to be a severely harmed, genuine whistleblower but be excluded by US whistleblowing incentive programme criteria and be left in the cold](#). It is a ruthless and neglectful model, which can be bitterly unjust.

It has been argued by some that financially incentivising whistleblowing also creates a perverse incentive to delay some disclosures. This may occur when informants delay reporting, in order to gather evidence to ensure that their disclosures qualify for the financial reward. This is because a reward under a SEC type programme is focused on the end result, of money successfully recouped by the State, and not on making a disclosure of itself. The less scrupulously will prioritise building a successful financial claim over the public interest. And of course, the self-interested nature of reward programmes is counter to the Nolan principles of selflessness which must apply to public servants.

Crucially, the private member's [Bill for an Office of the Whistleblower](#) touted by the former Whistleblowing APPG and by WhistleblowersUK opened the door to US style bounties by seeking to redefine UK whistleblowers not just as employees but as [all members of the public](#) – aligning with the US bounty hunting law, also known as qui tam.

In response to a critical documentary film, WhistleblowersUK recently denied that their Bill has provision for financial rewards. However, their Bill has provision for future alteration so that explicit financial rewards could be introduced once an Office of the Whistleblower was established.

I should point out that the US reward model targets the financial sector and disadvantages sectors such as Health and Social Care where there is very high public interest but little bounty to recoup. It is ironic that WhistleblowersUK has collected a number of high-profile whistleblowers from Health, who have an effect of legitimising its publicity for an Office of the Whistleblower.

But equally, please note that WhistleblowersUK has also promoted fraudsters as a whistleblowers: [the case of businessman Christen Ager-Hanssen and associates](#). This alone is a red flag.

A [media report](#) questioned whether WhistleblowersUK was motivated by financial considerations: "WhistleblowersUK has been accused of [turning away legitimate](#)

[whistleblowers due to their inability to pay](#) the ‘nonprofit’ for its services. But the group appears to have [welcomed CAH with open arms](#), likely due to his spurious claims to have the goods on a company with deep financial pockets.”

If the desire is to champion the spirit of the Hillsborough law to protect ordinary people from arbitrary and unaccountable power, WhistleblowersUK’s Office of the Whistleblower is not the answer. I submit that path will likely only make a few already powerful people richer, draining more money from the public purse into middlemen’s private coffers, and encourage malpractice.

If the desire is genuinely to protect the public interest and those who speak up in the public interest, there are other models for a central whistleblowing body. For example, the US Office of Special Counsel looks after federal whistleblowers and operates on a very different ethos to the Office of the Whistleblower. It seeks to ensure public service values and also offers more meaningful remedy besides financial redress. For example, correcting unfair disciplinary/performance records and restoring lost seniority. This means more to many whistleblowers, who just want the wrongdoing to be corrected, and to have their lives back.

Dr Philippa Whitford former MP previously introduced a Bill for an independent whistleblowing regulator which corrects key deficits in current UK whistleblowing legislation and offers some of the functions of a body such as the US Office of Special Counsel:

Public Interest Disclosure (Protection) Bill

I hope you will consider alternatives such as this and ultimately discount the questionable Office of the Whistleblower and its attached private interests.

Other concerns about WhistleblowersUK

Please also note that the concerns about WhistleblowersUK extend to issues of the company’s conduct and relationship with whistleblowers whom it purports to serve.

[WhistleblowersUK asks whistleblowers for payment for services and a percentage of settlements and awards.](#) This is of particular concern in the context that whistleblowers seeking help in crisis are often vulnerable. WhistleblowersUK also charges fees for associate membership without voting rights.

Some whistleblowers have reported mistreatment by WhistleblowersUK. Some of these matters were recently reported in a documentary film by JAM Motion Pictures, which obtained derogatory messages by WhistleblowersUK about whistleblowers. For example: “...they are all mad!”

One of the allegations reported in the documentary was a concern that WhistleblowersUK was less interested in lower paid workers, who had a poorer experience or might even be wholly ignored. This is very troubling if the allegation proves valid and foreshadows how a future Office of the Whistleblower may operate – focusing more on potentially lucrative

cases. It would be disturbing if we ended up with a system which favoured City big shots and disdained say, nursing and care assistants.

As far as I am aware, WhistleblowersUK, including its senior officers such as Tessa Munt Lib Dem MP, have to my knowledge not responded to the allegations of mistreatment of whistleblowers and discrimination. Instead, WhistleblowersUK posted claims on social media and on its company website that it had been given no right of reply to the film.

Very seriously, these claims accused a participating individual and the filmmakers of lying. [One of the claims was purportedly made by WhistleblowersUK's Chair,](#) who according to the company's website has since stepped down.

The claims were removed after JAM Motion Pictures reportedly produced the original right of reply correspondence, blind copied to their lawyers at the material time. However, I understand that WhistleblowersUK has not apologised and I have seen no published apology.

If WhistleblowersUK falls at this hurdle, there can be little confidence in its role in national change. If no apology is made for serious public accusations, this looks to me like an abuse of power, perhaps done in the comfort of presumed political protection.

Adding to concerns, some supporters of WhistleblowersUK made online posts that the allegations of whistleblower mistreatment/ discrimination were false, in the absence of investigation. I believe one of the individuals who were dismissive of the concerns is a Lib Dem Councillor.

Moreover, one of WhistleblowersUK's posts in response to the film by JAM Motion Pictures claimed that all concerns about WhistleblowersUK were previously referred to the parliamentary Standards Commissioner. As part of this, a document which purported to be an email sent by Stephen Kerr MP in 2019, and claimed that no case to answer had been found, was reproduced on the company's website. This related to questions raised by Norman Lamb on my behalf in 2019 about issues of possible conflict of interest and other matters. I have now made enquiries to parliament and have so far found no evidence that my questions were referred to the Standards Commissioner in 2019. I was certainly not informed by either Mr Kerr nor the Commissioner at that time. I have asked Mr Kerr for further information but am currently doubtful that a referral was ever made. If I am proven correct, [it would be not the first time that a claim by WhistleblowersUK could not be verified.](#)

I have so far received no response from Mr Kerr, apart from an automated receipt.

In conclusion

1. In short, I ask you to take the concerns raised about WhistleblowersUK seriously. And to heed Norman Lamb's warnings.

The company arguably conflicts with what true whistleblowers and the Hillsborough Law stand for. The proposed Office of the Whistleblower is an exploitative model which profits middlemen and is damaging to the public interest. It also tarnishes the reputation of whistleblowers, who already struggle.

Please do listen to a representative range of authentic grassroots opinions, and those who support whistleblowers free of charge, and not industry lobbyists.

2. I also ask that as Lib Dem leader, you ensure that party members do not promote WhistleblowersUK until and unless there is an investigation into the conduct of WhistleblowersUK as to:
 - i. The allegations that it has mistreated whistleblowers
 - ii. Its conduct in apparently falsely claiming that it was given no right of reply to the JAM Motion Pictures film, its public accusation that a participant and the filmmakers lied, and its lack of apology after removing these public accusations.
 - iii. I may add to this some additional issues regarding the claim that Whistleblowers referred concerns to the Standards Commissioner in 2019 and was exonerated, which has not so far been verified.

At present, Tessa Munt Lib Dem MP is a Vice Chair and director of WhistleblowersUK. Earlier this year the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards determined that she [failed to register her interest in the company.](#)

On 15 July 2026, whilst speaking in the Commons, Rachel Gilmour Lib Dem MP stated that [she had just joined the board of WhistleblowersUK,](#) and Companies House shows that she [became a director of the Company in June 2026.](#) In the debate she referred to “**Liberal Democrat calls to establish an Office of the Whistleblower**”, again suggesting that this is Lib Dem policy.

3. Arising from yours and Rachel Gilmour’s comments, I would be very grateful for clarification of Lib Dem policy on whistleblowing law and governance. Does the party support the [2022 Bill and Office of the Whistleblower proposed by Mary Robinson former MP](#) (the most detailed version of the Bill put forward by WhistleblowersUK so far)? Is it Lib Dem policy to support the establishment of an Office of the Whistleblower, as set out by the 2022 Robinson Whistleblower Bill? If not, what whistleblowing law reform is the Liberal Democrat party proposing? What are the details of any Office of the Whistleblower that the party seeks to establish if not the version proposed in the 2022 Robinson Bill? May I have a copy of any Bill proposed by the party?

I copy this to Ian Byrne and to Andy Burnham with whom I met years ago on the issue of NHS whistleblowing, with respect to the link that you have drawn to the Hillsborough Law.

Many thanks,

Minh

Dr Minh Alexander

Former consultant psychiatrist

Cc Ian Byrne MP Liverpool West Derby
Andy Burnham Prime Minister