

## The cost of blowing the whistle

A recent Employment Tribunal case in Leeds highlights the potential costs for employers if they fail to properly manage whistle-blowing claims at work.

Carol Lingard was a prison officer at Wakefield Prison in Yorkshire where Ian Huntley, the Soham murderer, is held. She “blew the whistle” on her colleagues alleging that one prison officer gave a Hitler salute to an Austrian inmate; that another attempted to plant images of naked children in a sex offender’s cell and that prisoners were being bullied.

Ms Lingard subsequently complained that she was badly treated by her employers for having raised her concerns. She subsequently resigned from her post and claimed unfair constructive dismissal, complaining that she was forced to resign for having blown the whistle.

The Leeds Employment Tribunal found in her favour and held that she had been unfairly dismissed and awarded her over £470,000 in compensation.

Employers’ need to be aware of this complex area of law. Failure to have an understanding of what the law expects can, as you can see from this case, be extremely costly. For some employers an award of this scale could put them out of business.

On Thursday 8 September 2005 (at 5pm) and Tuesday 13 September 2005 (at 12.00pm), we will be conducting a workshop on whistle-blowing and what employers’ should know to help avoid claims. The sessions, as always, are free to all of our clients and there is a minimal cost to non-clients. We are in the process of preparing our invitations but, in the meantime, if you would like to register for either of these dates, then please let Sejal Raja or Lara Crane know by telephone or email. Sejal’s contact details are: telephone 0207-227-7410; [sejal.raja@rlb-law.com](mailto:sejal.raja@rlb-law.com); Lara’s contact details are : telephone 0207-227-7478; [lara.crane@rlb-law.com](mailto:lara.crane@rlb-law.com) .

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If you would like any information on any of these or other employment matters, then please contact Lara Crane ([lara.crane@rlb-law.com](mailto:lara.crane@rlb-law.com)) or Kerry Scott-Patel ([kerry.scott-patel@rlb-law.com](mailto:kerry.scott-patel@rlb-law.com)) or telephone on 020 7222 7040.

Readers are advised to take specific advice before acting in reliance on the matters set out in this briefing.

### EMPLOYMENT

RadcliffesLeBrasseur  
5 Great College Street  
Westminster  
London SW1P 3SJ

Tel +44 (0)20 7222 7040  
Fax+44 (0)20 7222 6208  
LDE 113

6-7 Park Place  
Leeds LS1 2RU

Tel +44 (0)113 234 1220  
Fax+44 (0)113 234 1573  
DX 14086 Leeds Park Square

25 Park Place  
Cardiff CF10 3BA

Tel +44 (0)29 2034 3035  
Fax+44 (0)29 2034 3045  
DX 33063 Cardiff 1

info@rlb-law.com  
www.rlb-law.com