

Investigations: 10 top tips

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1. Decide why an investigation is needed

- Difficult questions to answer?
 - Serious consequences?
 - Possible conflicts of interest?
 - Publicity?
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- See also tip 4: Terms of Reference

2. Find the right investigator(s)

- Appropriate skills
- Experience and training
- Independence and conflict checks
- Individual or team

3. Ensure independence

- Conflict checks
- Deciding the remit
- Witness selection
- Admin support
- Hospitality
- Equality of arms

4. The right terms of reference

- Who decides
- Purpose of the investigation: findings, recommendations
- Investigation rules
- Making changes

5. Timeframe

- Large and small investigations
- Elusive witnesses
- Twists in the road
- Report writing

6. Communication

- Initial announcement
- System for updates
- Contacting the investigator
- Outcome announcement
- Report circulation

7. Participation

- System for contacting (and “encouraging”) witnesses
- The officious bystander
- External organisations
- Other authorities

8. Taking and recording evidence

- Hearings or interviews
- Agenda
- Sound recording and notes
- Witness sign-off
- List of documents
- Gaps
- Archiving and destruction

9. Report writing

- Define the questions
- Evidenced findings
- Reasoned findings
- Opportunity to comment

10. There will be consequences!

- Announcement
- Challenge
- Complaints
- Litigation