

Workplace Whistleblowing: What your board needs to know

With remote and flexible working trends here to stay, it is more important than ever that senior executives and board members understand the importance of providing access to a confidential whistleblowing process.

From health & safety, and harassment & discrimination, to data privacy, financial misreporting and conflicts of interest, organisations should ensure their employees and stakeholders can always safely speak up about their concerns, no matter where they are located.

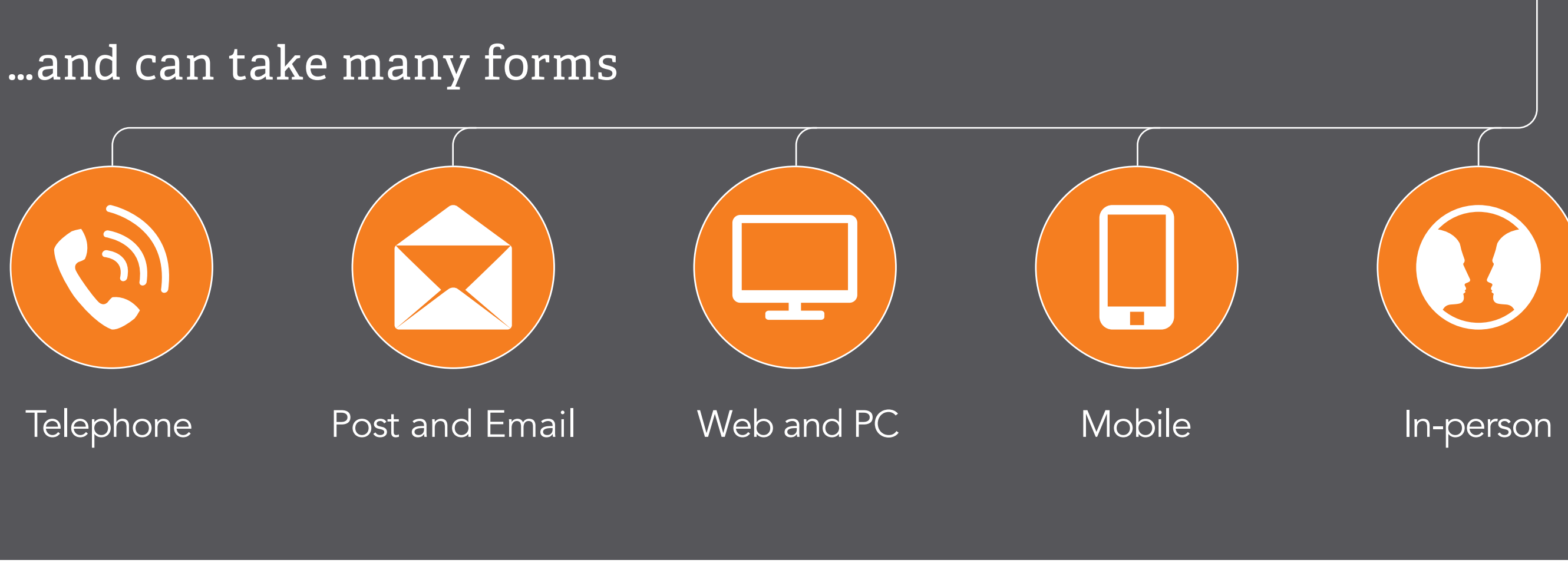
Below are 8 key facts your board needs to know about workplace whistleblowing.



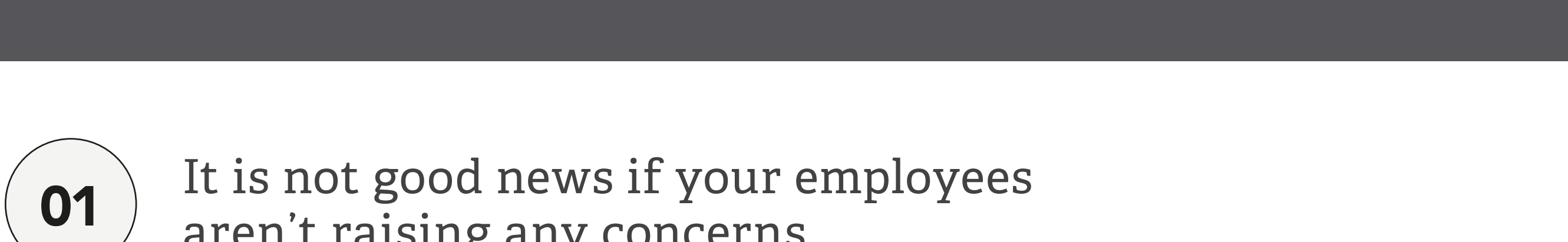
What is a whistleblower?

A whistleblower is an employee, or external stakeholder, who reports a concern or suspected wrongdoing that may have occurred within the workplace. A report can relate to a potential breach of law, company policy, or unethical activity, and is made confidentially to senior management, or to the organisation's nominated whistleblowers' champion, or submitted through a dedicated whistleblowing channel. Employees can also submit a report externally to the appropriate industry or government body.

Whistleblowing channels are known by many names...



...and can take many forms



01 It is not good news if your employees aren't raising any concerns

Your board needs to know that it is not good news if your employees aren't raising any concerns as it is likely that misconduct is still occurring within the workplace.

Many employees have concerns they wish to raise, but most are not comfortable in doing so. It is far more beneficial to encourage your employees to raise their concerns so they can be identified and resolved early on rather than remain unchecked where they can escalate into a crisis.



Every organisation faces the risk that something will go badly wrong and ought to welcome the opportunity to address it as early as possible.

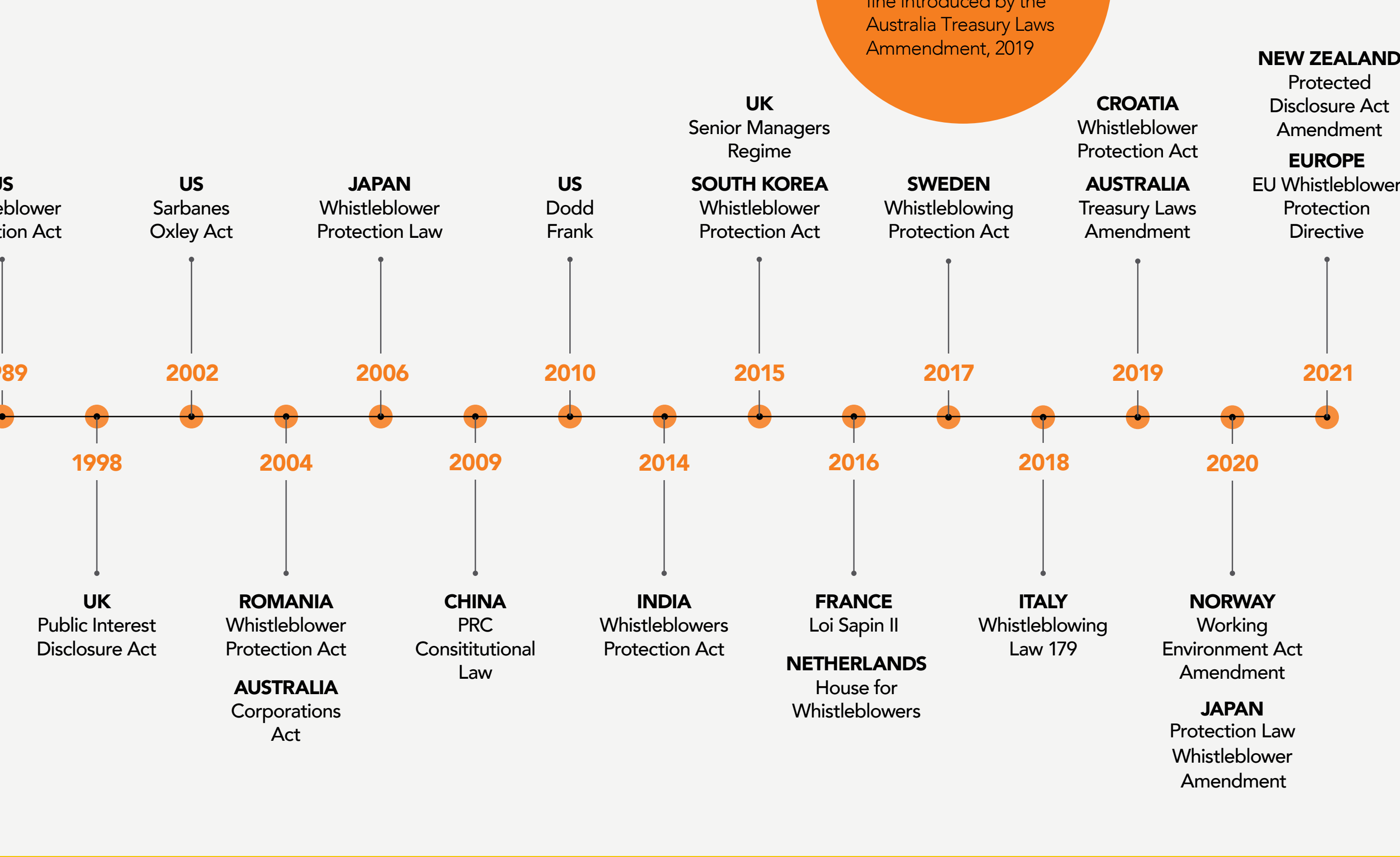
Whistleblowing Arrangements – Code of Practice, BSI British Standards

02 Establishing a whistleblowing process is a legal requirement

Your board needs to know that whistleblower regulations are not only increasing around the world but many jurisdictions are also amending existing regulations to broaden the requirements and establish enforcement mechanisms.

Hundreds of thousands of organisations are now legally required to have whistleblowing processes in place, depending on their size, location or industry. Failure to comply with these laws may result in prosecution and severe financial penalties.

MAJOR COMPLIANCE REGULATIONS ARE BEING INTRODUCED AND UPDATED WITH TOUGHER REQUIREMENTS



Many public and private organisations are now required by law to establish a whistleblowing process.

Discover an inexpensive online whistleblowing tool that is easy to order, implement and use.

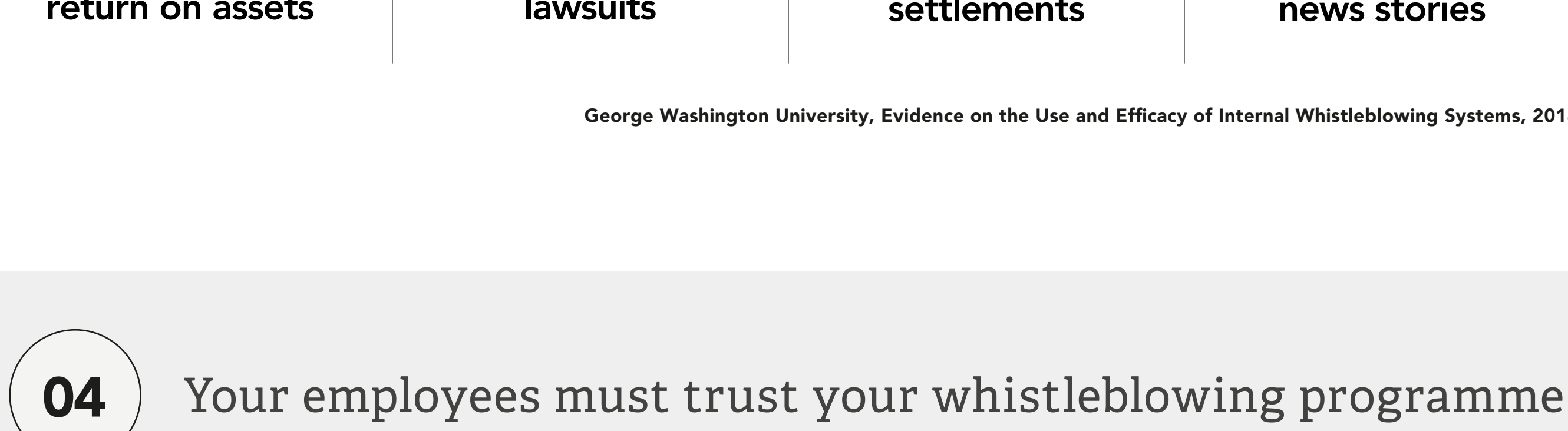
FIND OUT MORE

03 The more whistleblowing reports you receive, the better

Your board needs to know that receiving a high number of whistleblowing reports is good for business.

It is a common misconception that receiving whistleblowing reports is a sign of an unhealthy culture and an underperforming business. On the contrary, academic research shows that a strong speak-up culture where employees raise their concerns not only helps the business achieve regulatory compliance, but it also provides a strategic competitive advantage. The data shows that the more whistleblowing reports you receive, the better your organisation's financial performance is likely to be.

ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS OF RECEIVING A HIGHER NUMBER OF WHISTLEBLOWING REPORTS



04 Your employees must trust your whistleblowing programme

Your board needs to know that your employees will only raise their concerns if they trust your whistleblowing programme.

There are three essential requirements to establishing trust with your whistleblowing programme and to maximise the likelihood that your employees will speak up about their concerns.



05 The more reporting channels you provide, the more reports you will receive

Your board needs to know that the more communication channels you provide for your employees to raise their concerns, the greater the number of whistleblowing reports you will receive.

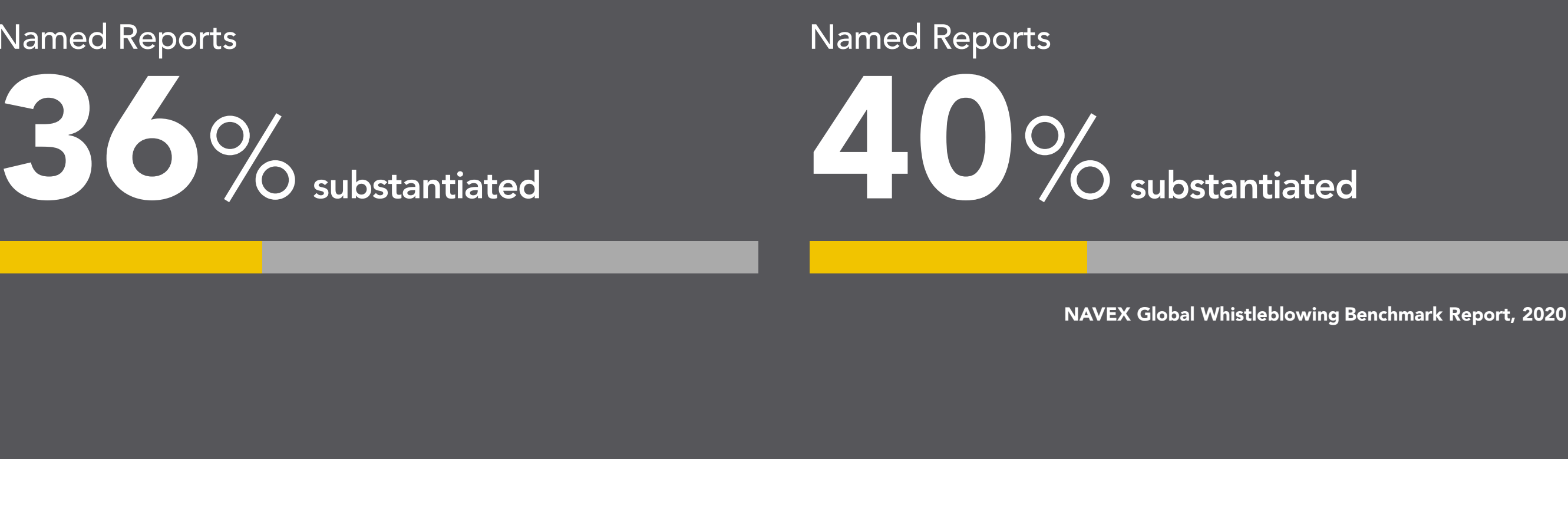
To maximise engagement with your whistleblowing programme you should aim to provide a range of reporting channels such as web, telephone, mobile, and in-person. This allows the whistleblower to choose the communication channel they feel most comfortable using and increases the likelihood that they will submit a report.



06 Anonymous whistleblowing reports hold significant value

Your board needs to know that anonymous whistleblowing reports are valuable and should be encouraged.

There is a long-standing, and unfounded, belief that anonymous reports are frivolous or deliberately false compared to named reports. Data shows that anonymous whistleblowing channels continue to provide valuable insights and high levels of substantiated allegations. Organisations should therefore ensure they have channels in place that allow employees to report their concerns anonymously.

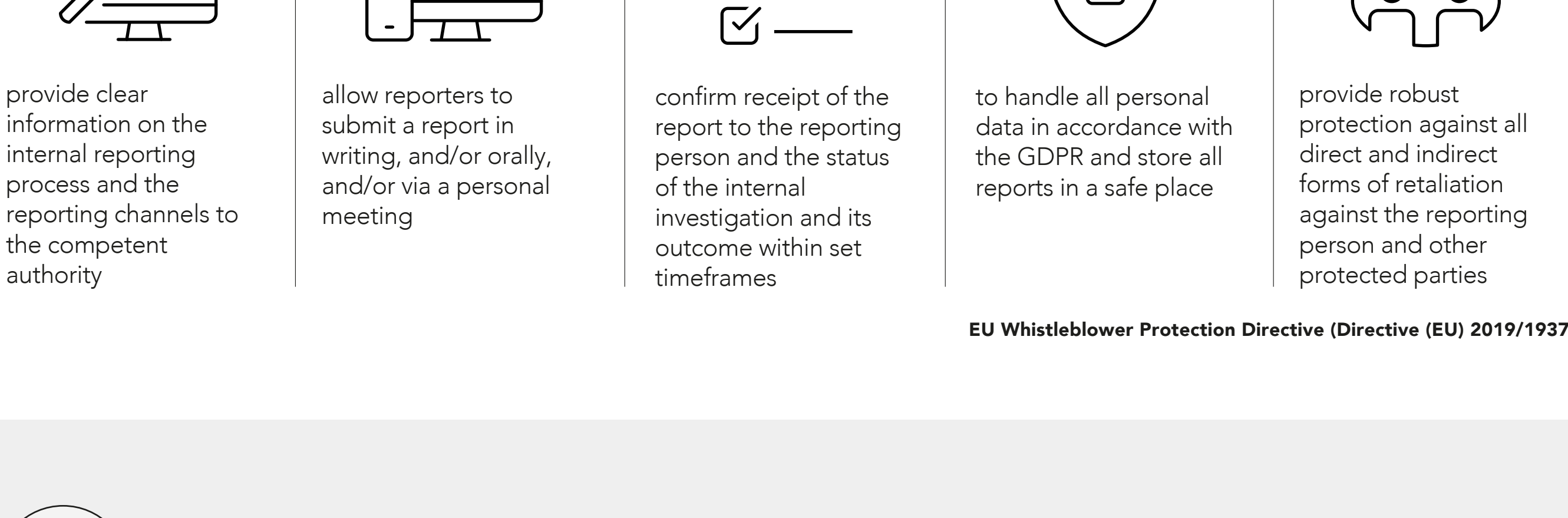


07 Regulations require minimum whistleblowing standards

Your board needs to know that your organisation may be legally obliged to maintain minimum standards throughout the whistleblowing process.

Legal requirements cover the provision of whistleblowing services across many stages of the process. These include requirements relating to whistleblowing awareness and reporting options, to managing the investigations process, providing appropriate feedback and safeguarding the reporter.

REGULATIONS MAY REQUIRE A WHISTLEBLOWING PROGRAMME TO:



08 Whistleblowing improves your risk and compliance programme outcomes

Your board needs to know that effective whistleblowing processes can bring significant benefits to your wider compliance programme.

Organisations can gain additional insights and build a stronger workplace culture by connecting the whistleblowing programme with the broader compliance framework. Whistleblowing data provides valuable information on the efficacy of your risk and compliance programme and provides full visibility of your organisation's risks for better reporting and decision making.



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