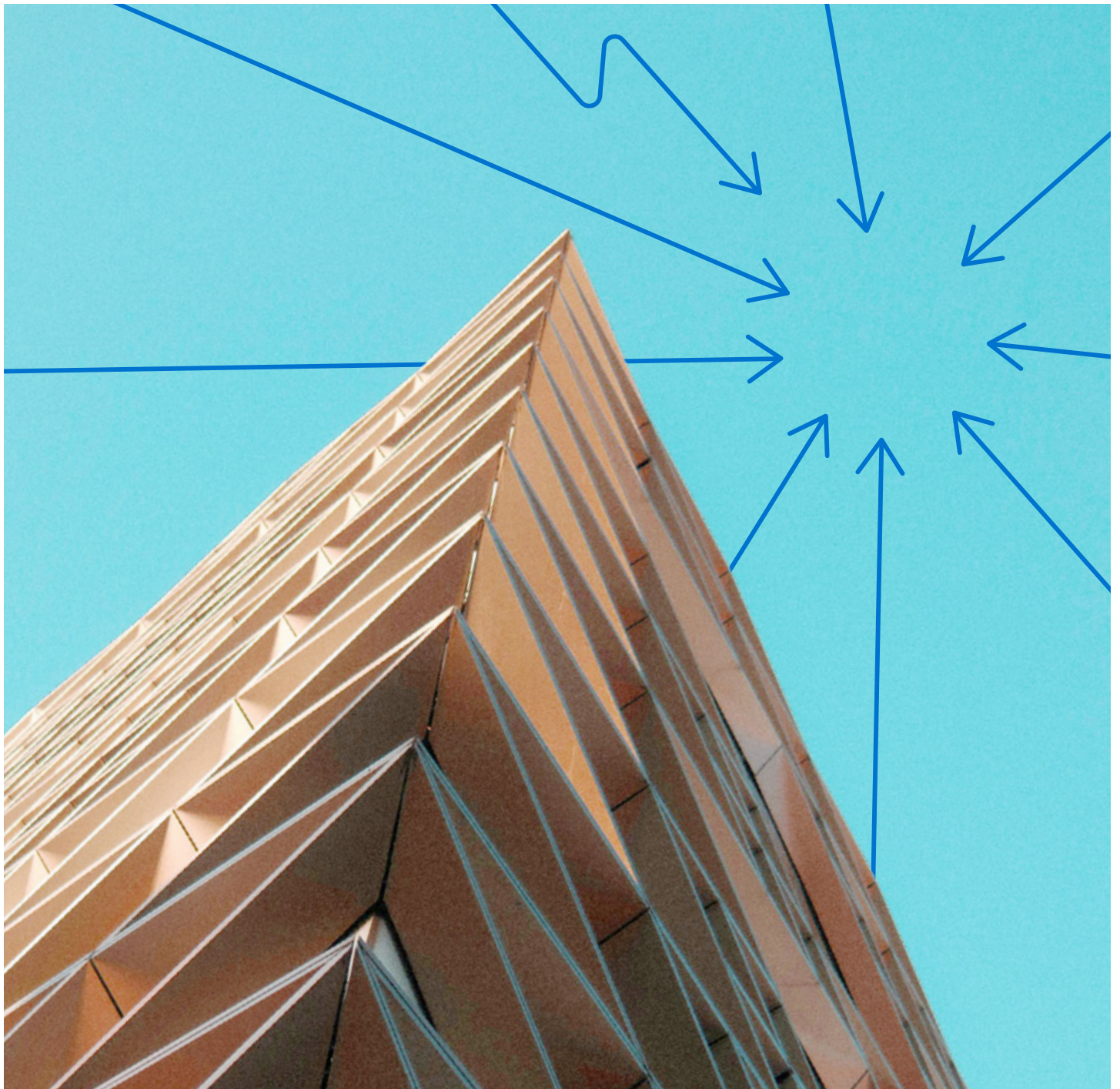


# Whistleblowing and Compliance in the United Kingdom

A Data-Driven Snapshot

2026



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# Introduction

Joe Stubbs

United Kingdom Country Manager



Understanding how employees raise concerns and how organizations respond remains central to building effective risk and compliance programs. For compliance leaders, benchmarking case management data provides a practical lens through which to evaluate program performance, identify gaps and communicate value to senior stakeholders.

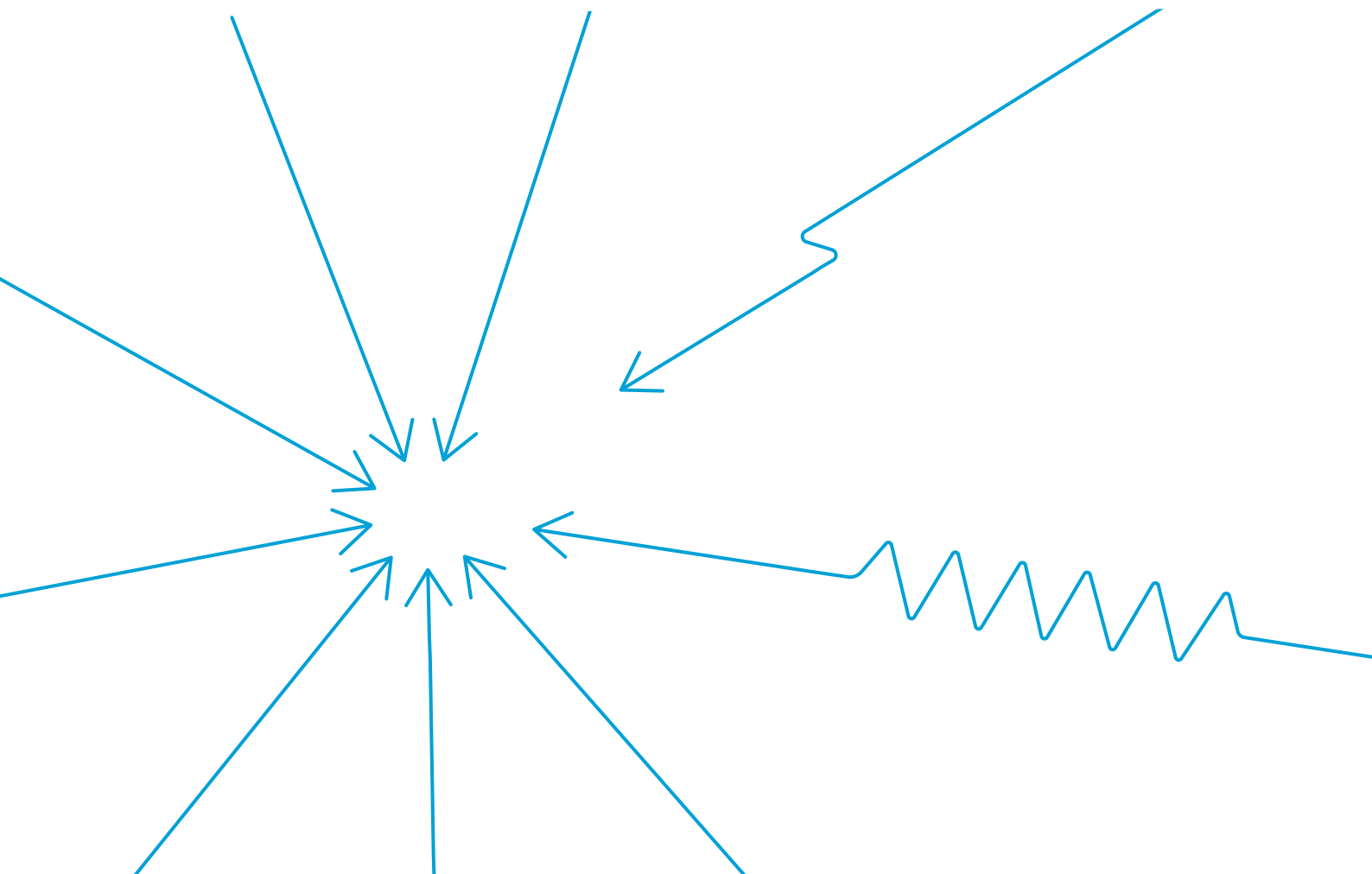
This snapshot compares United Kingdom reporting data against both global and continental Europe benchmarks, drawing on hotline metrics and survey insights. While individual metrics offer directional insight, their real value lies in how they collectively reflect organizational culture, program maturity and leadership engagement.

For boards and C-suite leaders, these data points help answer critical questions: Are employees speaking up? Do they trust reporting channels? Are organizations resolving concerns effectively? Increasingly, these insights are also used to demonstrate governance effectiveness and regulatory alignment to external stakeholders. For practitioners, they offer a grounded way to assess whether their program aligns with peers and where strategic improvements may be needed. Taken together, benchmarking data should be interpreted as a directional indicator. Not a definitive measure of program quality, helping organizations identify trends rather than isolated outcomes.

# Whistleblowing in the UK

The United Kingdom has long maintained established whistleblowing protections, supported by legislation such as the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA). These protections, combined with regulatory expectations across sectors, contribute to a relatively mature compliance environment.

Culturally, UK employees tend to demonstrate familiarity with formal reporting channels, including hotlines and web-based systems. However, familiarity does not always translate into higher reporting volumes. As the data shows, reporting behavior is influenced not only by awareness, but also by trust, perceived outcomes and organizational culture.

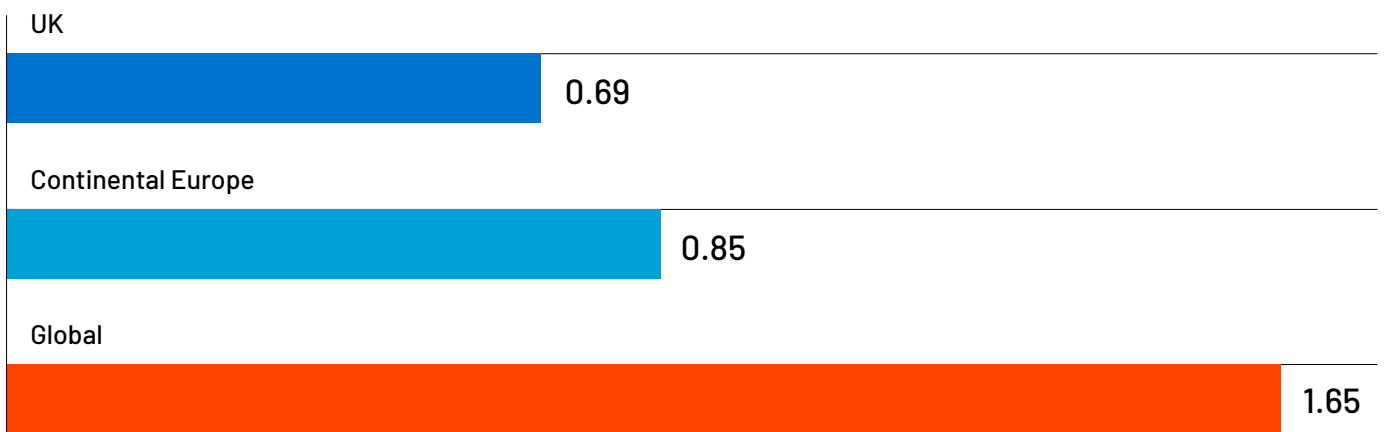




01  
Whistleblowing  
and case  
management data:  
UK vs. global and  
continental Europe

# Do fewer reports mean fewer risks?

## REPORTS PER 100 EMPLOYEES



The UK reports a lower reporting volume than continental Europe, with 0.16 points fewer Reports per 100 Employees (0.69 vs. 0.85). Compared to the global benchmark, the gap is more pronounced: the UK Reports per 100 Employees are 0.69, compared to the global measure of 1.65.

This suggests that reporting activity in the UK and Europe more broadly remains comparatively subdued. Several factors may contribute to this pattern, including cultural norms around escalation, differences in program maturity, or varying levels of employee awareness and trust in reporting channels.

Lower reporting volume does not necessarily indicate lower misconduct. In many cases, it reflects barriers to speaking up or preferences for informal resolution. The difference between the UK and continental Europe, while relatively small, points to a consistently lower reporting baseline rather than a one-time variation. The larger gap relative to the global benchmark further reinforces that European reporting levels operate within a different reporting dynamic, in which employees may be more selective about escalating concerns through formal channels.

# Anonymity remains high

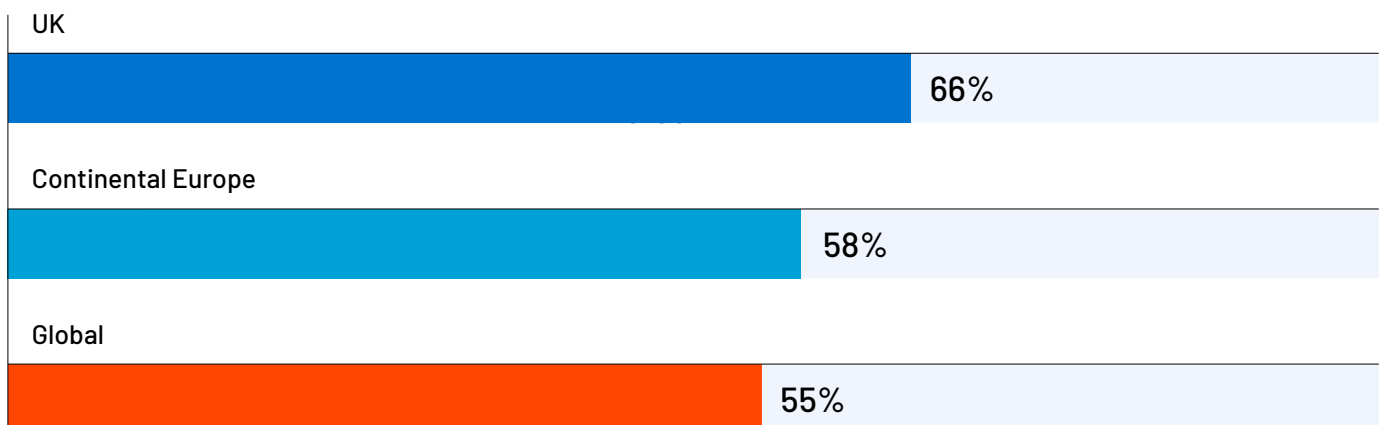
Anonymous reporting is notably higher in the UK, exceeding continental Europe by eight percentage points, and the global benchmark by 11 percentage points.

With a full two-thirds of reports submitted anonymously, UK reporters appear to place strong emphasis on confidentiality. This may reflect heightened awareness of anonymous reporting options, but it may also indicate lingering concerns about retaliation or negative consequences.

For practitioners, this highlights an important balance: while anonymity can encourage reporting, a heavy reliance on it may signal underlying trust gaps.

The eight percentage point difference between the UK and continental Europe suggests a slightly stronger preference for anonymity in the UK, while the 11 percentage point difference compared to the global benchmark indicates this is a more pronounced regional characteristic. Strengthening visible protections against retaliation and demonstrating fair case outcomes can help shift this dynamic over time. Organizations that successfully build trust in their processes often see a gradual increase in identified reporting.

## ANONYMOUS REPORTING RATE



# Consistent Substantiation Rates across regions

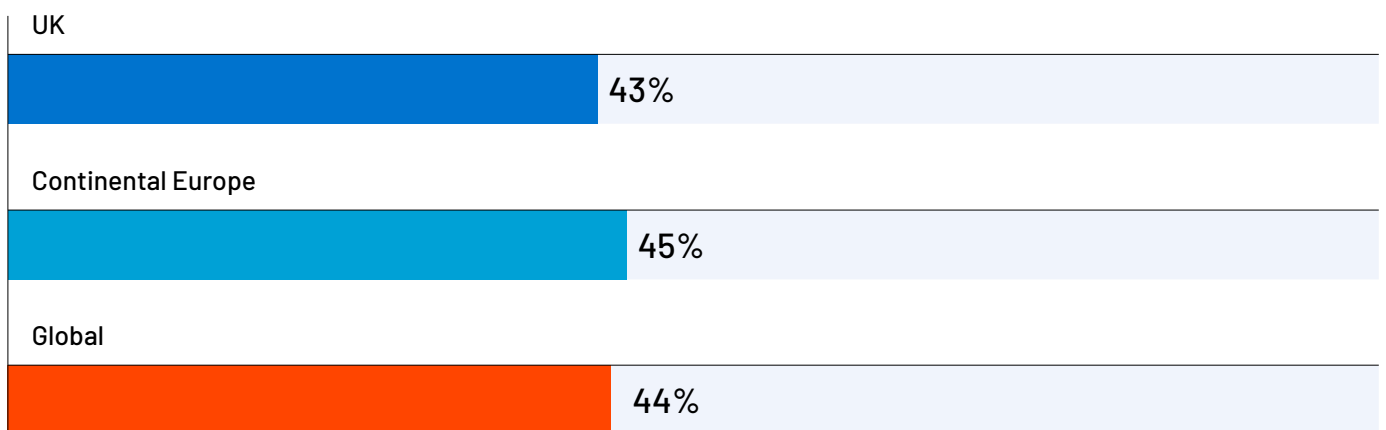
Substantiation rates in the UK are broadly aligned with benchmarks, sitting two percentage points below continental Europe and one percentage point below the global average.

This consistency suggests that despite differences in reporting volume and anonymity, investigation quality and outcomes are relatively stable across regions.

Organizations in the UK are identifying confirmed issues at comparable rates, indicating that case intake and triage processes are functioning effectively. This suggests that once concerns are raised, organizations apply broadly similar investigative standards and reach comparable conclusions across regions.



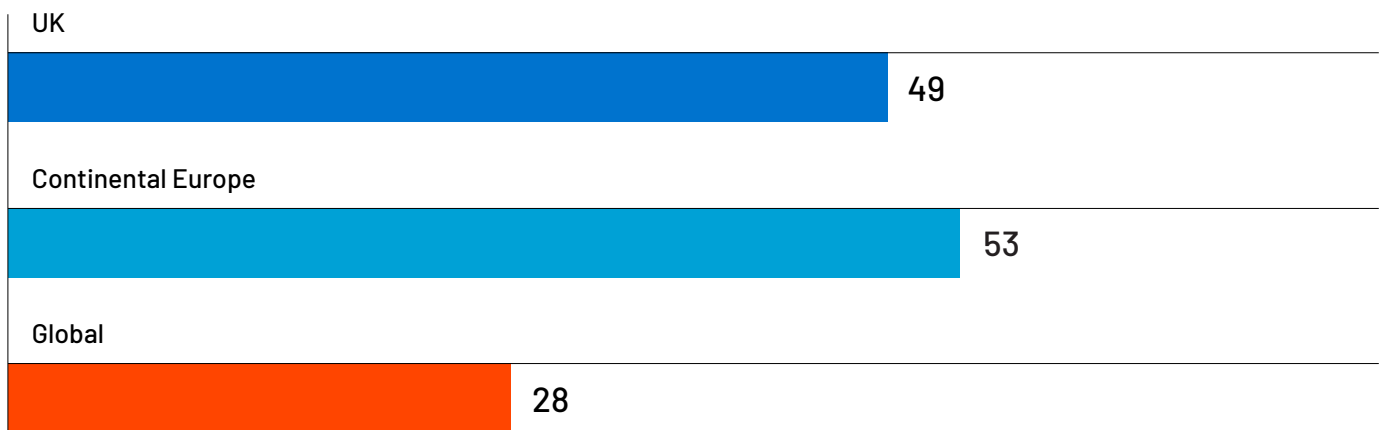
## SUBSTANTIATION RATE



# European companies have a substantially longer Case Closure Time



CASE CLOSURE TIME (DAYS)



UK organizations resolve cases four days faster than continental Europe, on average, but still take 21 days longer than the global median.

These extended timelines are a defining characteristic of European compliance programs. They may reflect regulatory complexity, more formal investigative procedures or the challenges of operating across multiple jurisdictions.

While thorough investigations are essential, prolonged timelines can impact employee trust and willingness to report.

For compliance leaders, this underscores the importance of balancing rigor with efficiency, ensuring investigations are both comprehensive and timely, and communication is consistent with reporters.

# Global variations in Risk Categories

Across risk categories, the UK shows a broadly similar distribution to continental Europe, with some notable variations:

**Workplace Conduct** remains the most frequently reported category across all regions. The UK is 0.5 percentage points below Europe and 3.4 percentage points below the global benchmark, indicating a consistent but slightly lower concentration of these issues.

We also see fewer **Business integrity** reports in the UK than in continental Europe, but they are closely aligned with the global benchmark. This suggests UK reporting may be somewhat less focused on integrity-related concerns compared to continental peers.

The UK reports a higher concentration of **financial-related issues**, exceeding Europe by 1.7 percentage points and the global benchmark by two percentage points.

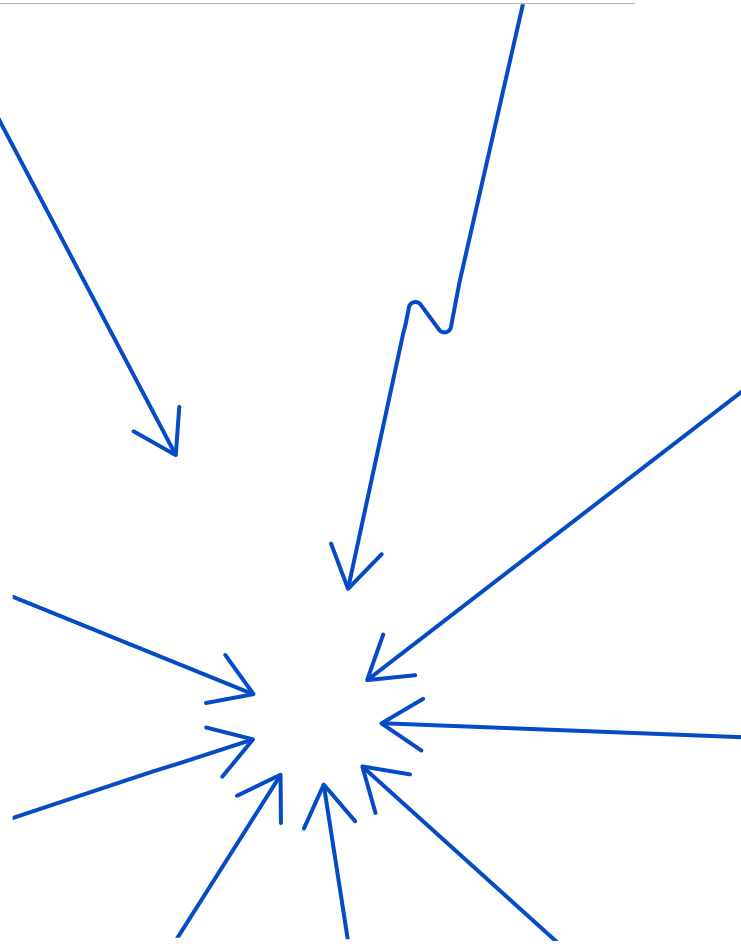
**Environment, Health & Safety** concerns are more prominent in the UK, with 2.7 percentage points higher than Europe and 2.1 percentage points higher than global levels.

Reports in the **Misuse or Misappropriation of Assets** category are slightly higher than Europe and than global benchmarks.

The UK shows a broader distribution of “**Other**” concerns, exceeding continental Europe by 3.4 percentage points and global levels by 4.2 percentage points. The “**Other**” category is one that we also discuss in the global Whistleblowing & Incident Management Benchmark Report as a trend that deserves careful attention. Organizations experiencing an increase in “**Other**” reporting should evaluate whether developments within “**Other**” point to evolving cultural or operational themes or reflect opportunities to improve classification consistency and awareness.

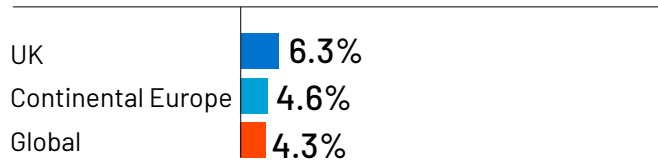
**Insight:**

While Workplace Conduct remains dominant, the UK demonstrates a slightly greater concentration in operational and financial risk categories. At the same time, lower Business Integrity reporting suggests a relative shift away from broader ethical concerns toward more tangible compliance and workplace issues. The higher "Other" category may also indicate a wider range of concerns being captured outside standard classifications.

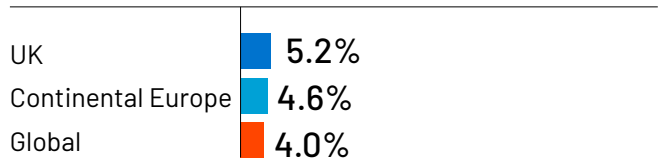


**RISK CATEGORY REPORTING**

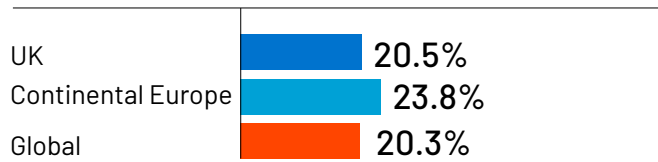
**Accounting, Auditing & Financial Reporting**



**Misuse or misappropriation of assets**



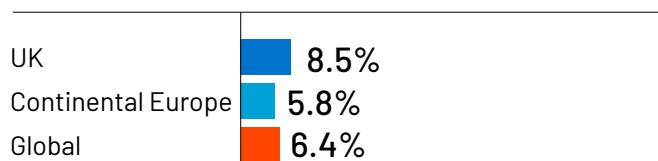
**Business Integrity**



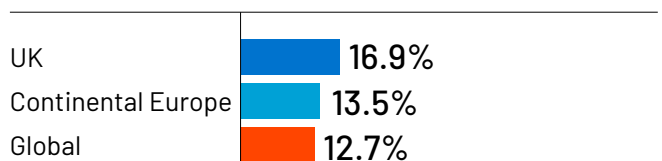
**Workplace Conduct**



**Environment, Health & Safety**



**Other**



# Reporting channels: a digital-first Europe

The UK relies heavily on web-based reporting, though still nine points lower than Europe (53% vs. 62%). At the same time, “Other” channels, such as managers or in-person reporting are 10 percentage points higher in the UK compared to Europe.

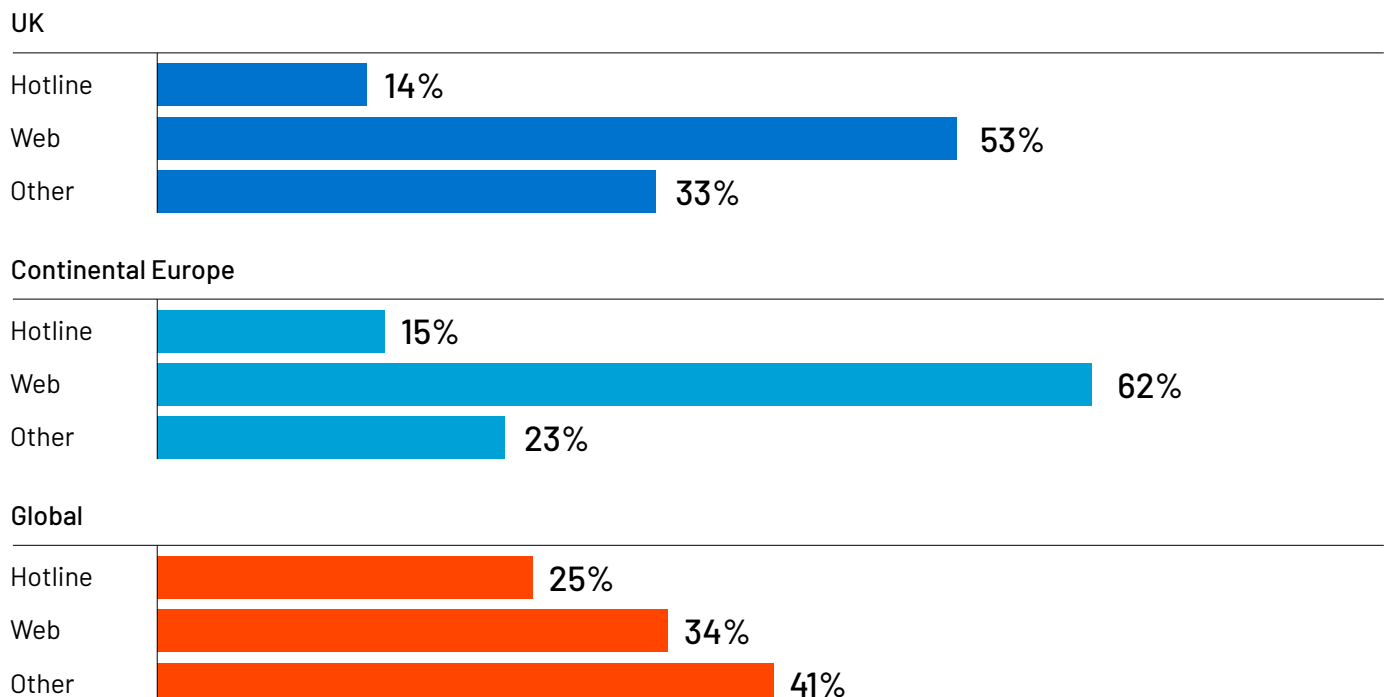
Hotline usage remains relatively low in both regions, sitting 11 points below the global benchmark in the UK and 10 percentage points below in Europe.

This distribution highlights a clear regional preference for digital and internal reporting channels over phone-based hotlines.

For practitioners, it reinforces the importance of maintaining multiple accessible pathways, particularly web and in-person channels, while ensuring consistent case handling across all intake methods.

The greater use of “Other” channels in the UK suggests that employees may be more inclined to report concerns through internal or interpersonal channels rather than more “formal” systems. At the same time, the 11-point lower hotline usage compared to the global benchmark reinforces that phone-based reporting plays a more limited role in UK and European programs.

## REPORT INTAKE METHODS (FREQUENCY)



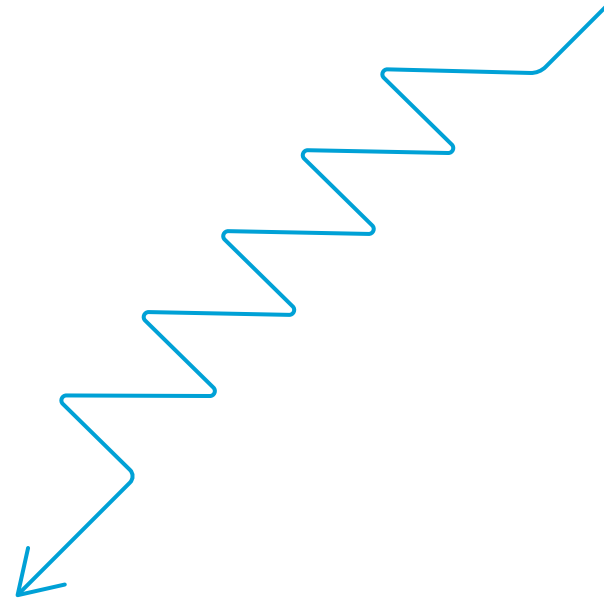
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# State of Risk & Compliance survey benchmark insights in the United Kingdom

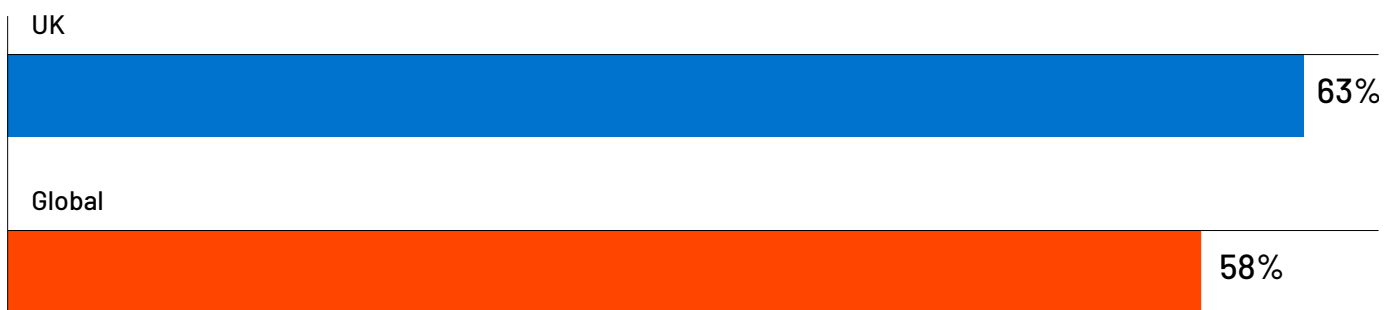
# Higher program maturity in the UK

UK-based survey respondents report a higher level of maturity, with 63% of organizations in Managing or Optimizing stages, compared to 58% globally.

This indicates that UK organizations are more likely to have established compliance infrastructures, including formal policies, reporting systems and governance mechanisms.



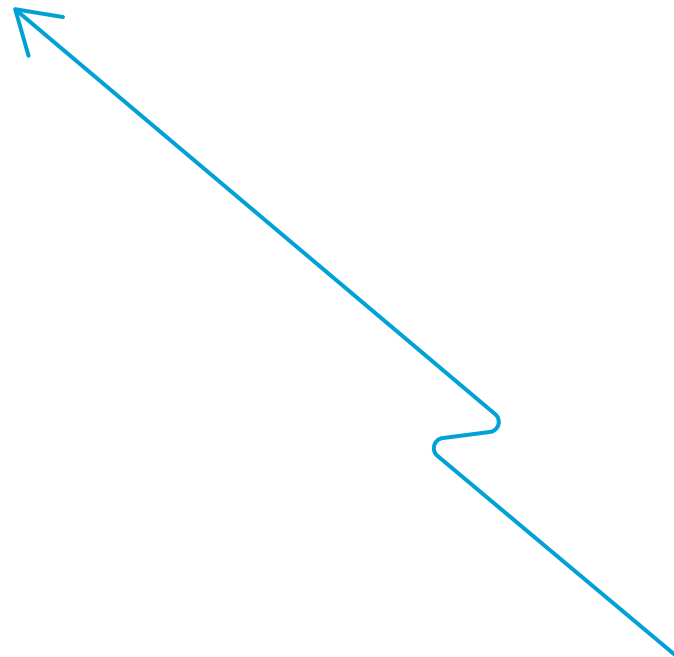
## PROGRAM MATURITY LEVEL: MANAGING OR OPTIMIZING



# Strong leadership commitment to compliance

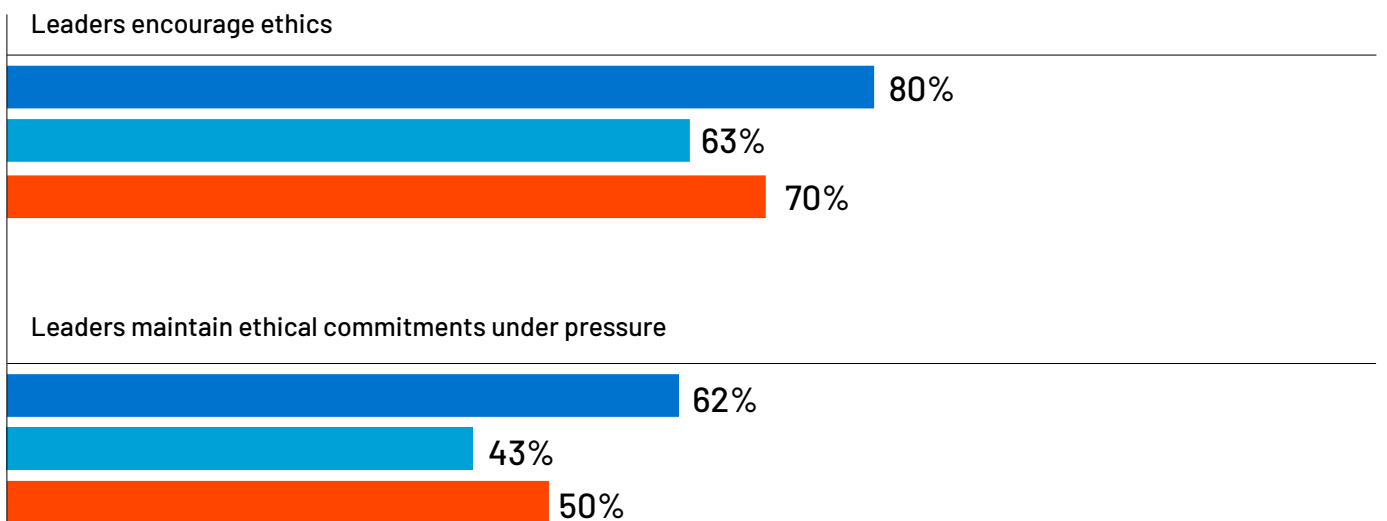
Leadership engagement is a defining strength in the UK.

Differences in perceptions of organizations' senior leaders suggest that tone from the top is particularly strong in UK organizations. Leadership behavior plays a critical role in shaping speak-up culture, influencing whether employees feel safe and supported when raising concerns.



## PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONS' SENIOR LEADERS

■ UK    ■ Continental Europe    ■ Global



# Developed speak-up infrastructure

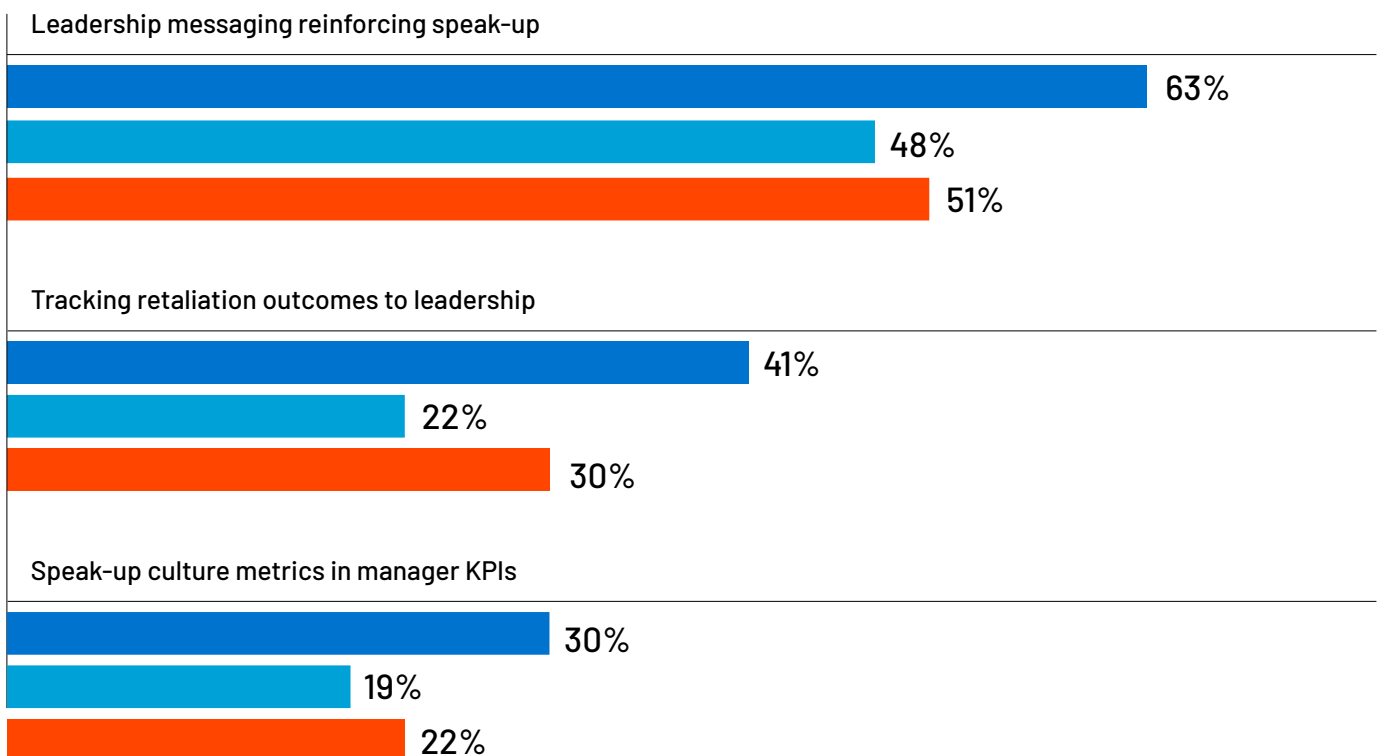
The UK leads across multiple governance measures.

These practices indicate a more developed speak-up infrastructure, reinforced by leadership. Speak-up culture is not only encouraged but also measured, tracked and embedded into management accountability frameworks.



## MEASURES ORGANIZATIONS' HAVE IN PLACE TO PROMOTE A STRONG SPEAK-UP CULTURE

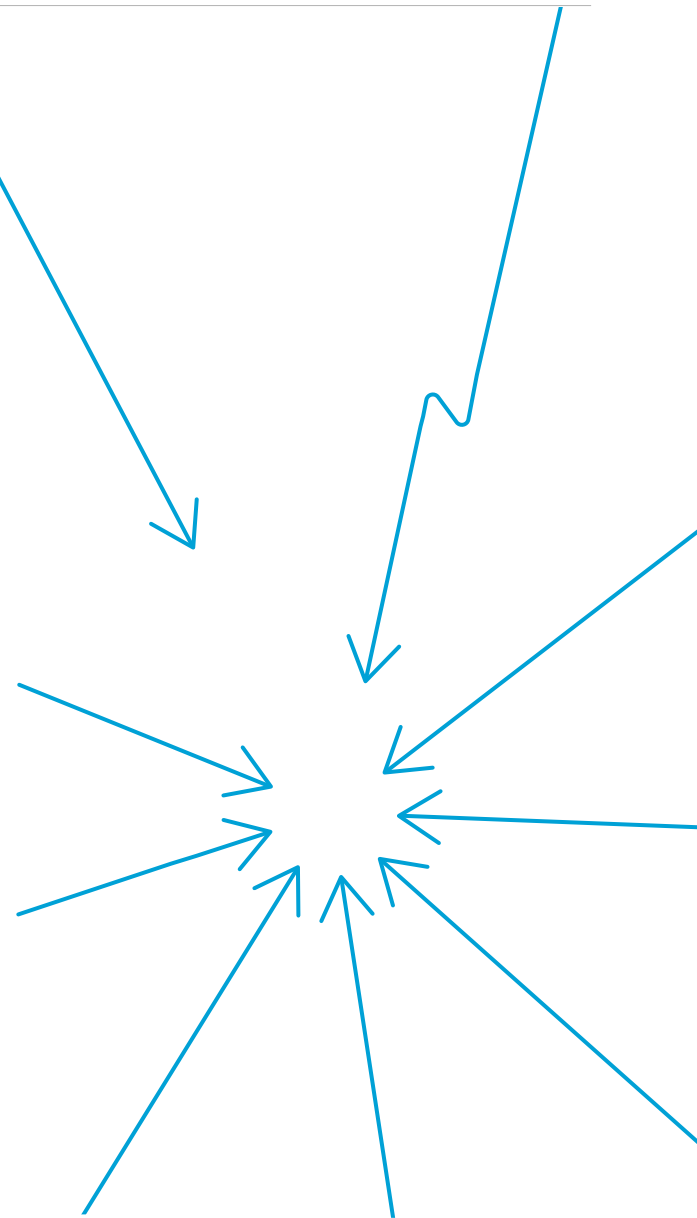
UK    Continental Europe    Global



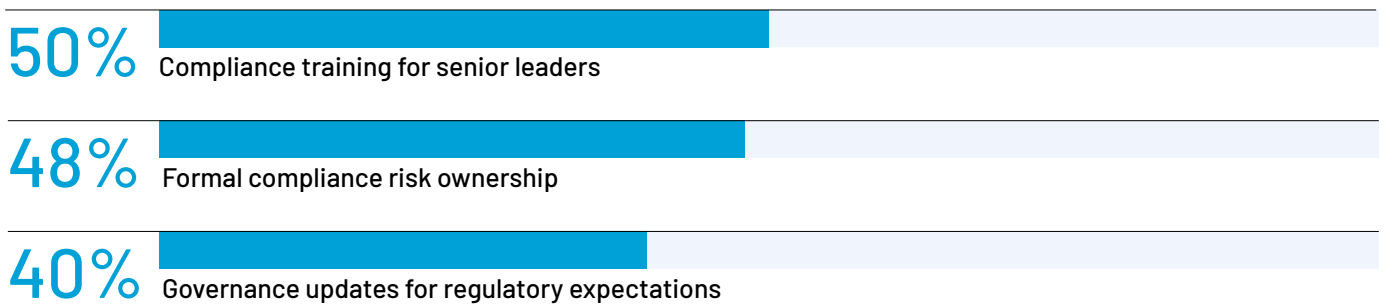
# Strengthening executive accountability

By assigning accountability at the executive level, organizations are reinforcing the importance of compliance as a core leadership responsibility, not just a functional one.

Regulatory frameworks continue to influence UK compliance programs



## STEPS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN EXECUTIVE-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RISK AND COMPLIANCE



# Key considerations for UK compliance leaders

The data presents a nuanced picture. UK organizations demonstrate strong program maturity, leadership engagement, and governance infrastructure. At the same time, lower reporting volumes and high anonymity rates suggest opportunities to further strengthen employee trust and engagement.

## Key priorities include:

- **Closing the reporting gap:**  
Encourage greater use of reporting channels by reinforcing awareness, accessibility and trust.
- **Reducing reliance on anonymity:**  
Strengthen non-retaliation messaging and visibly demonstrate fair outcomes to build confidence in named reporting.
- **Improving investigation efficiency:**  
Streamline processes where possible to reduce case closure times without compromising quality.

- **Balancing reporting channels:**  
Ensure consistency across web, hotline, and open door-based reporting pathways.
- **Sustaining leadership engagement:**  
Continue embedding accountability at senior levels to reinforce ethical culture.

Ultimately, the UK's strong compliance foundation provides a platform for continued improvement. By focusing on trust, transparency and accessibility, organizations can further enhance their speak-up culture and ensure reporting mechanisms function as effective tools for risk detection and organizational integrity.

Closing the gap between program maturity and employee reporting behavior will be critical to maximizing the effectiveness of existing compliance frameworks.

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