

Whistle-blowers Policy

A) INTRODUCTION

Under certain circumstances, employees are protected from suffering any detriment or termination of employment if they make disclosures about organisations for whom they work.

B) QUALIFYING DISCLOSURES

1) Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as “qualifying disclosures”. A “qualifying disclosure” means a disclosure of information that the employee genuinely and reasonably believes is in the public interest and shows that the Organisation has committed a “relevant failure” by:

- a) committing a criminal offense;
- b) failing to comply with a legal obligation;
- c) a miscarriage of justice;
- d) endangering the health and safety of an individual;
- e) environmental damage; or
- f) concealing any information relating to the above.

2) These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen. The Organisation will take any concerns that you may raise relating to the above matters very seriously.

3) The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides protection for workers who ‘blow the whistle’ where they reasonably believe that some form of illegality, injustice or breach of health and safety has occurred or is likely to occur. The disclosure has to be “in the public interest”. We encourage you to use the procedure to raise any such concerns.

C) THE PROCEDURE

1) In the first instance you should report any concerns you may have to the Managing Director who will treat the matter with complete confidence. If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter with the appropriate official organisation or regulatory body.

2) If you do not report your concerns to the Managing Director, you should take them directly to the appropriate organisation or body.

D) TREATMENT BY OTHERS

Bullying, harassment or any other detrimental treatment afforded to a colleague who has made a qualifying disclosure is unacceptable. Anyone found to have acted in such a manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

E) WHAT ACTION SHOULD THE ‘WHISTLE BLOWER’ TAKE?

The Link Charitable Trust encourages the ‘whistle blower’ to raise the matter internally in the first instance to allow those staff, managers and trustees in positions of responsibility

and authority the opportunity to right the wrong and explain the behaviour or activity. The Link Charitable Trust has designated a number of individuals to specifically deal with such matters and the 'whistle blower' is invited to decide which of those individuals would be the most appropriate person to deal with the matter.

Supporting Spaces Co-ordinator - Maureen Hanley
Family Hub Manager - Annette Duff
Director - Tina Blinkhorn
Trustee Chair - Richard Dowson

Contact can be made through the office telephone number: 01642 989198

The 'whistle blower' may prefer to raise the matter in person, by telephone or in writing to one of the above-named individuals. All matters will be treated in strict confidence and anonymity will be respected wherever possible.

F) HOW WILL THE MATTER BE PROGRESSED?

The individual(s) in receipt of the information or allegation, the Investigating Officer(s), will carry out a preliminary investigation. This will seek to establish the facts of the matter and assess whether the concern has foundation and can be resolved internally. The initial assessment may identify the need to involve third parties to provide further information, advice or assistance, for example involvement of other members of staff, legal or personnel advisors, the police, Redcar & Cleveland Authority. Records will be kept of any meetings/conversations undertaken and actions taken throughout the investigation.

The Investigating Officer(s), possibly in conjunction with the board of Trustees, and will consider how best to report the findings and what corrective action needs to be taken. This may include some form of disciplinary action or third-party referral such as the police. The 'whistle blower' will be informed of the results of the investigation and the action taken to address the matter. The matter will be reported to the Board of Trustees, and the local authority depending on the nature of the concern or allegation and whether or not it has been substantiated. If the 'whistle blower' is dissatisfied with the conduct of the investigation or resolution of the matter or has genuine concerns that the matter has not been handled appropriately, the concerns should be raised with the Investigating Officer(s), the Board of Trustees and, or directed to Redcar & Cleveland Local Authority.

G) RESPECTING CONFIDENTIALITY

Wherever possible The Link Charitable Trust seeks to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of the 'whistle blower' and will as far as possible protect him or her from reprisals. The Link Charitable Trust will not tolerate any attempt to victimize the 'whistle blower' or attempts to prevent concerns being raised and will consider any necessary disciplinary or corrective action appropriate to the circumstances.

H) RAISING UNFOUNDED MALICIOUS CONCERNS

Individuals are encouraged to come forward in good faith with genuine concerns with the knowledge they will be taken seriously. If individuals raise malicious, unfounded concerns or attempt to make mischief, this will also be taken seriously and may constitute a disciplinary action or require some other form of penalty appropriate to the circumstances.

I) CONCLUSION

Existing good practice within The Link Charitable Trust in terms of its systems of internal control both financial and non-financial and the external regulatory environment in which the Trust operates ensure that cases of suspected fraud or impropriety rarely occur.

This Whistle Blowing Policy is provided as a reference document to establish a framework within which issues can be raised confidentially internally and if necessary outside the management structure of The Link Charitable Trust. This document is a public commitment that concerns are taken seriously and will be fully investigated.

J) LINKS FOR HELP AND ADVICE

You can access the guidelines for 'Whistleblowing for employees' through the GOV.UK website - <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>

This document will be reviewed every 2 years, or as required.

Signed

Name Tina Blinkhorn

Date