



## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **Background**

Linstone Housing Association is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability.

In line with that commitment, Linstone expects employees, Committee Members and others who have serious concerns about any aspects of the Association's work to come forward and voice those concerns.

It is recognised that certain cases will need to proceed on a confidential basis.

"Whistleblowing" has been described as raising concerns about misconduct within an organisation or giving information – usually to authorities - about illegal or underhand practices. This Whistleblowing Policy has been prepared and based on EVH Guidelines.

### **What is our Policy?**

It is to demonstrate and ensure good practice in all of our activities. It is recognised that our staff and Committee may very often be the first to see or suspect misconduct or wrongdoing.

Whilst this may very well be innocent, it could turn out to be fraud on our organisation; a potential public danger or some other form of serious malpractice.

Linstone will take action against anyone who attempts to defraud the organisation or engages in any malpractice which affects our good reputation.

### **What Constitutes Malpractice?**

Malpractice includes the following:-

Fraud

Corruption

Negligence

Danger to Health & Safety

Administrative Breaches (e.g. Allocations)

Abuse of Those in Care

Public Safety Issues

Discrimination

Pollution

Unethical Conduct

and the “cover up” of any of these instances

### **How do We Practice Openness?**

- Every Employee and Committee Member will be provided with a copy of this Policy.
- It will be highlighted to new Committee and Staff Members during the induction process.
- A copy will be publicised on Staff Notice Boards and wherever else appropriate e.g. (Contact Points/Committee Meeting Rooms etc.).
- We will promote effective communication throughout the organisation by encouraging staff to raise good ideas and concerns without fear or favour. We will use various vehicles of communication e.g. “one to one” contact; staff/team meetings; staff/committee “Away Days”.
- We will encourage staff to contribute to the development of our organisation and ensure a constantly improving quality of service.
- Staff will be encouraged to comment on this and other Policies and their views are important in Policy development.
- We have developed Policies which currently meet the requirements of the Law; our Regulators Scottish Homes and Good Practice Guidelines. For example amongst our Policies we have ones covering
  - Conflict of Interest
  - Gifts & Hospitality
  - Health & Safety
  - Tendering Procedures
  - Housing Management
  - Financial Management

### **How Do I Raise Concerns About Malpractice?**

- Staff should raise concerns, in the first instance, with their immediate supervisor.
- If preferred or more appropriate staff can approach the Director who will be available to all staff.
- Committee Members should raise concerns with the Director or Chairperson, whichever is more appropriate.
- If an employee feels that they cannot raise the concern with either their immediate supervisor or the Director it can be raised with the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Committee or the Chair of the Internal Audit Committee or the Internal Auditor.
- Employees and Committee Members should be assured that Linstone's Management Committee and Director will support all those who have an honest and reasonable suspicion that malpractice has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur.
- Staff and Committee should know that if their wish is for confidentiality then this will be respected.
- Staff can also obtain advice from
  - their Trade Union (The T & G contact is 0141 332 7321)
  - the Charity, "Public Concern at Work" 0171 404 6609)
  - the Association's Solicitor Kate Dewar, Henderson Boyd Jackson WS on 0131 226 6881

### **How Will Linstone Treat Malicious Allegations?**

The Association will deal firmly with those staff or Committee who make false allegations maliciously.

If you act maliciously you could leave yourself open to disciplinary action or even dismissal (if a staff member) or removal from the Committee, depending on the circumstances.

### **Our Promise**

- To respect confidentiality.
- To investigate thoroughly.
- To provide support and protection if necessary.
- To report back on the outcome of our investigations.
- To report, if possible, on any resultant action that is proposed.

### **Finally**

Linstone hopes never to have to use the terms of this Policy. However, it is essential that where any thing goes wrong, we have the opportunity to put it right and justify the trust put in us by our tenants, communities, partners, employees and committee members.