



## 1. Purpose

Following the enforcement of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 in July 1999, it is necessary to have a policy to encourage people to unburden grievance concerns without fear of discrimination.

The term “whistleblower” is used to describe any person, usually a member of staff, which may include employees, freelance staff or volunteers, who becomes aware of a serious problem in the organisation and raises the matter so it may be investigated and, if necessary, corrected.

Sometimes this may involve bringing the problem to wider attention. Early disclosure may give Suffolk Artlink the opportunity to rectify the problem.

## 2. Persons affected

Employees of Suffolk Artlink  
Volunteers of Suffolk Artlink  
Freelance staff  
Suppliers  
Customers  
Service users (participants) of Suffolk Artlink

## 3. Policy

Suffolk Artlink is committed to the highest standards of quality, openness and accountability.

This commitment is evidenced through Board meetings, regular staff meetings, including freelance staff taken on to fulfil contracts, complaints procedure, disciplinary and grievance procedures etc.

As part of that commitment, we encourage anyone with serious concerns about any aspect of the work to come forward and express their concerns. In many cases, concerns or complaints will be dealt with through the procedures mentioned.

## 4. Procedure

The following procedures are proposed to make provision for anyone to disclose information of suspected malpractice within Suffolk Artlink on a confidential basis and to be protected against victimisation or dismissal.

The openness and accountability to which we commit relates to any concerns regarding any of the following:

- A criminal offence
- Financial frauds and malpractice
- Other types of corruption

- Attempts to deliberately cover up information
- Abuse or neglect of vulnerable people and children
- Damage to the environment
- Failure to deliver proper standards of service
- Damaging personal conflicts at senior level
- Bullying, harassment or victimisation in the work place
- Breach of a legal obligation
- Danger to health or safety of an individual

Concerns should be reported at an early stage before problems have a chance to become serious. We will support concerned employees, freelance staff, suppliers, volunteers, service users or any other person and protect them from reprisals or victimisation. Confidentiality will be respected.

Any member of staff, whether an employee, freelance or volunteer, found trying to discourage concerned employees, suppliers, volunteers or service users from coming forward to express a concern will be subject to disciplinary action. In the same way, an employee or other member of staff criticising or victimising an employee, volunteer, supplier or service user as a result of a concern being expressed will also face disciplinary action.

### **Who to Contact**

In the first instance, anyone wishing to report a concern should do so, in confidence, with one of the Suffolk Artlink Co-Directors. If for some reason this is not possible, (e.g. the concern relates to one of the Co-Directors) then they should report it to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

If anyone wishes to seek advice or clarification before reporting any matter they should speak with one of the Suffolk Artlink Directors.

If policy and procedures within the organisation are working properly there should be no need for contact to be made with an external agency to express concerns. However, if these internal procedures have been exhausted, then the concerns may be reported as follows:

- if the problem involved a very senior member of staff of the organisation - contact the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of criminal offence – contact the police – and notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of abuse of children and vulnerable people – the local authority social services and notify the trustee lead for safeguarding who will then notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of abuse of public funds – contact Companies House – and notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- In the case of any fraud – contact the independent examiner – and notify the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Matters should not be raised with the press or other media (to do so will result in a disciplinary action).

### Contact Details

Co-Director & Adult and Child Protection Lead Officer, Hayley Field, Tel: 01986 873955, Email: [hayley@suffolkartlink.org.uk](mailto:hayley@suffolkartlink.org.uk)

Co-Director & Adult and Child Protection Lead Officer, Director, Alex Casey, Tel: 01986 873955, Email [alex@suffolkartlink.org.uk](mailto:alex@suffolkartlink.org.uk)

Chair of Trustees, Sarah Bardwell, [S.Bardwell@brittenpears.org](mailto:S.Bardwell@brittenpears.org)

Or write to any of the above at Suffolk Artlink, Units 13 & 14 Malt Store Annex, The Cut, 8 New Cut, Halesworth, IP19 8BY

Independent Examiner, Lovewell Blake, First Floor Suite, 2 Hillside Business Park, Bury St Edmunds, IP32 7EA – contact Kyle Smith, Assistant Manager, telephone: 01284 337070 email: [k.smith@lovewell-blake.co.uk](mailto:k.smith@lovewell-blake.co.uk)

### Dealing with Concerns

All concerns will be investigated carefully and thoroughly.

If appropriate, results of investigations and any action that is proposed will be passed on to the person expressing the initial concern. However, confidentiality needs to be maintained at all times.

If it is found that malicious, unfounded allegations have been made this will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

### 5. Revision history

The Suffolk Artlink Board of Trustees will review this policy and procedures on an annual basis.

Date approved	Date Amended
Sep 2011	Sept 2012
Sept 2013	
22 September 2014	17 Jan 2017
	9 May 2017
21 July 2020	