

Whistle Blowing Policy



Revision History:

Date	Details	Author	Review date
July 2013	New policy	Vicky Wyer	July 2016
July 2016	Reviewed	Vicky Wyer	July 2019
July 2019	Reviewed	Vicky Wyer	July 2022
June 2022	Reviewed	Adrian Stones	June 2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Triangle Community Garden (TCG) has a range of policies and procedures which deal with standards of behaviour; they cover discipline, grievance, harassment and recruitment and selection. You are encouraged to use the provisions of these procedures when appropriate. There may be times, however, when the matter is not about your personal position and needs to be handled in a different way.
- 1.2. The word "whistleblowing" in this Policy refers to the disclosure, internally or externally, of wrongdoing involving TCG. This policy aims to help you to raise any serious concerns you may have about TCG with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result. The policy is intended to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings, such as the following:
 - a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed, or is likely to be committed
 - failure to comply with any legal obligation
 - a miscarriage of justice
 - a health and safety risk
 - damage to the environment
 - fraud or corruption
 - the mistreatment of service users
 - unauthorised use of TCG's assets
 - breaches and abuses of TCG's policies or code of conduct
 - undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant
 - concealment of any of the above.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to members, staff, service users, volunteers, trustees, and steering group members in dealings with TCG.

3. Context / Background

- 3.1. TCG is committed to being open, honest and accountable. It encourages a free and open culture in its dealings.
- 3.2. The policy is written in the context of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects workers who 'blow the whistle' on malpractices within their organisation.

4. Policy

- 4.1. TCG encourages you to use the internal mechanisms explained below for reporting any malpractice or illegal acts or omissions.
- 4.2. If you reasonably suspect that wrongdoing has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, you may report it even if you do not have definite proof. However, if you knowingly or maliciously make an untrue allegation, TCG will take appropriate action against you. If you are an employee, the disciplinary procedure will be followed. The making of an untrue allegation may constitute gross misconduct.
- 4.3. The officer designated to handle whistleblowing concerns is the Project Manager.

5. What you should do

- 5.1. If you are an employee, you should, in most cases, first report your concern to your line manager, who will deal with it if possible. If it is not appropriate for a line manager to deal with the concern, or if you are not an employee, the concern should be referred to the Project Manager. If the matter concerns the Project Manager, you can raise it with the Chair of Trustees, or any other Trustee.
- 5.2. You are encouraged to raise your concerns in writing whenever possible, setting out the background and history (giving names, dates and places where possible) and indicating the reasons for your concerns.
- 5.3. You may wish to seek the assistance of your trade union representative, if you have one, when using the provisions of this policy. The trade union representative may, if you wish, raise the concern on your behalf. You may also invite a trade union representative or colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews about the concerns you have raised.
- 5.4. If you reasonably believe that the matter relates wholly or mainly to the conduct of a person or body other than TCG or any other matter for which a person or body other than TCG has legal responsibility, the disclosure should be made to that other person or body.

6. Protecting the individual raising the concern

- 6.1. If you raise a concern which you believe to be true, TCG will take appropriate action to protect you from any harassment, victimisation or bullying. You will not be at risk of losing your job with TCG, nor will your whistleblowing influence any unrelated disciplinary action or redundancy procedures. TCG will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures), and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence. The matter will be treated confidentially if you request it and your name or position will not be revealed without your permission unless TCG is required to do so by law. If the concern

cannot be resolved without revealing your identity, the Project Manager or Trustee will discuss with you whether and how to proceed.

6.2. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective but the Project Manager or Trustee will decide whether or not to consider the matter taking into account:

- the seriousness of the matter
- whether the concern is believable
- whether an investigation can be carried out based on the information provided.

7. How TCG will deal with the concern

7.1. Precisely how the concern will be dealt with will depend on what it involves. It is likely that further enquiries and/or investigation will be necessary. You will receive an acknowledgement within ten working days of the concern being raised. This acknowledgement will indicate:

- how TCG plans to deal with the matter
- an estimate of how long it will take to provide a response
- any initial enquiries that have been made

7.2 The concern may either be investigated by the Project Manager or the Trustees, using the processes set out in the TCG disciplinary procedure, or it may be referred to the police, other agencies, an external auditor or an independent investigator.

7.3 It may be necessary for you to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings.

7.4 TCG will give you feedback on the progress and outcome of any investigation wherever possible.

7.5 If the suspicions are not confirmed by an investigation, the matter will be closed.

7.6 You will not be treated or regarded any differently for raising the concern, and your confidentiality will continue to be protected.

7.7 If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, TCG recognises your lawful rights to make disclosures to prescribed persons such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Environment Agency or the Charity Commission.

8 Publication

- This policy will be available at Ransom's Pavilion, and on the Triangle Garden website: www.trianglegarden.org. It is available on request in hard copy – please email liz@trianglegarden.org or write to Triangle Community Garden, c/o Hitchin Initiative, 1A Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HR.
- Current and new members of staff, volunteers, trustees, tutors, hirers and contractors will be made aware of its existence and any revisions made.