

Date approved:	28 June 2021
To be reviewed:	June 2022

# Whistleblowing Policy

## For LI Members and Volunteers

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this policy sets out the overall approach of the Landscape Institute to Whistleblowing for members, volunteers, staff, including associates, contractors and consultants.
- 1.2. The Landscape Institute (LI) is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. We recognise that LI members, members of the Board of Trustees (Board), Advisory Council (Council) or Committees may be the first to realise that there may be serious issues of concern within the organisation.
- 1.3. In line with the LI's commitment to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability, we encourage members, volunteers and other individuals who have serious concerns about the way the organisation is being governed/managed to come forward and voice those concerns through the appropriate channel.

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1. The whistleblowing policy and procedure is in place to ensure that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by members, staff, volunteers or others working on behalf of the Institute is reported and properly dealt with.
- 2.2. It is intended to cover concerns on activities that are:
  - i. unlawful; the organisation is breaking the law or there has been a miscarriage of justice or a criminal offence such as fraud;
  - ii. not in the public interest; meaning the activity must have detrimentally affected others, or it may affect others in the future;
  - iii. in breach of any other legal obligation, e.g., against the Institute's financial and statutory procedures and policies;
  - iv. amounts to improper conduct or someone covering up wrong doing.
- 2.3. The purpose is also to ensure the confidentiality and protection of those making such allegations in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so, and to protect them from being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged.

### 3. Principles

- 3.1. Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing within the Institute. Members, volunteers, and others working on behalf of the Institute should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- 3.2. Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the person who raised the issue.
- 3.3. No member, volunteer or other person working on behalf of the Institute will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that membership benefits and the continued opportunities for future volunteering or work will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.

- 3.4. Victimisation of an individual for raising a serious concern will be a disciplinary offence and would lead to the appropriate action taken under the relevant terms of engagement with the individual concerned.
- 3.5. If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure our disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

#### **4. Scope**

- 4.1. This policy applies to all Landscape Institute members, volunteers, including associates, contractors and consultants. A separate whistleblowing policy for staff is available in the LI's employee handbook.
- 4.2. The policy would be published on the Institute's website and communicated at the point of engaging the relevant persons listed in paragraph 3.1. above.
- 4.3. The policy does not replace other LI internal policies or procedures. For example, if a member or volunteer has a concern about the professional conduct of another member or volunteer, they should follow the procedure for complaints under the Code of Conduct or Working Together Policy.

#### **5. How to raise a Whistleblowing Concern**

- 5.1. The LI recognises that the decision to make an allegation can be a difficult one. However, if you raise a whistleblowing concern in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do, you are doing your duty either to the LI and/or to those for whom the LI is providing a service.
- 5.2. How you raise your concerns will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and whether members or management are thought to be involved.
- 5.3. You would normally raise your concerns with the relevant Chair, Convenor or senior member of the LI staff team. Alternatively, you may feel it more appropriate to contact the Chief Executive, the responsible Independent Trustee, Honorary Secretary or the President.
- 5.4. They will advise you on how the Institute can best support you through the process and for as long as you need it afterwards.

#### **6. Confidentiality**

- 6.1. All concerns raised under this policy will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity unless you otherwise request.
- 6.2. If the concerns raised under this policy results in court proceedings, then you may be required to give evidence in open court if the case is to be successful.
- 6.3. The Institute will do its best not to divulge your identity to anyone beyond those carrying out or directly involved in the investigation. However, it must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information without us revealing your identity directly and you may be required to give evidence as part of the investigation. We will take every step to minimise any difficulties that you may experience as a result of raising a concern.
- 6.4. We would therefore urge anyone wishing to raise a concern under this policy to identify themselves. This enables us to investigate the allegations in a more informed and effective way and means we can inform the complainant of the outcome of the investigation or explain why a matter is not being investigated. Concerns expressed anonymously are often much more difficult to investigate but we will consider anonymous allegations, taking into account the seriousness of the issue raised; the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation for other attributable sources.

## **7. Follow-Up Action**

- 7.1. If you make an allegation in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation no action will be taken against you.
- 7.2. However, if you make malicious or vexatious allegations, appropriate action may be taken against you through the disciplinary process or other relevant process depending on your terms of engagement with the Institute.
- 7.3. An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a chair, convenor or your line manager, you should not agree to remain silent.
- 7.4. To raise a concern with the President by emailing [President@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:President@landscapeinstitute.org), Honorary Secretary by emailing [Hon.Sec@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:Hon.Sec@landscapeinstitute.org), Independent Trustee by emailing [Report@whistleblowing-landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:Report@whistleblowing-landscapeinstitute.org) or the CEO by emailing [CEO@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:CEO@landscapeinstitute.org)
- 7.5. Alternatively, you can write to the President, Honorary Secretary, Independent Trustee for WBP or Chief Executive at the following address: The Landscape Institute, 85 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4TQ marking your envelope "WBP-Only to be opened by the addressee".

## **8. Timetable**

- 8.1. An acknowledgement of the allegation in writing within 10 working days with an indication of how the LI proposes to deal with the matter:
  - i. An estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response
  - ii. An indication of whether any initial enquiries have been made
  - iii. Information on whistleblower support mechanisms
  - iv. Indication whether further investigations will take place and if not, give reasons.
- 8.2. Where the allegation has been made anonymously, the LI will be unable to communicate what action has been taken.

## **9. Responsibility for the Policy**

- 9.1. The CEO liaising with the responsible Independent Trustee have overall responsibility for the operation of this Policy and for determining the administrative processes to be followed and the format of the records to be kept.

## **10. Monitoring**

- 10.1. A Whistleblowing Register will record the following details:
  - i. The name and status (e.g., member, staff, contractor etc) of the whistleblower
  - ii. The date on which the allegation was received
  - iii. The nature of the allegation
  - iv. Details of the person who received the allegation
  - v. Whether the allegation is to be investigated and, if yes, by whom
  - vi. The outcome of the investigation
  - vii. Any other relevant details
- 10.2. The Register will be confidential and only available for inspection by the Board.
- 10.3. The responsible Independent Trustee working with the CEO will report periodically to the Board on the operation of the Procedure and on the whistleblowing, allegations made during the period covered by the report. The report will be in a form which does not identify whistleblowers.

## **11. Data Protection**

- 11.1. When an individual makes a disclosure, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with the LI's data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.