



WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Reviewed: January 2018

Next Review Date: January 2019

'Helping Sustain Rural Communities'

***'To Provide Homes for Rural People in
Need'***

- 1.1 Lincs Rural is committed to the highest standards of quality, probity, openness and accountability.
- 1.2 As part of that commitment, employees and other stakeholders with serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and express those concerns. In most cases it will be appropriate to deal with concerns through our normal procedures, such as the mechanisms for resolving complaints, grievances, disciplinary matters, or concerns relating to equal opportunities.
- 1.3 However, in some cases, it is recognised that a concerned individual or individuals may wish to come forward on a confidential basis. This is something that they must be able to do **without fear of reprisal or victimisation.**
- 1.4 This statement is intended to underline Lincs Rural's commitment to them and our support for those who come forward to express their concerns.

2.0 Consultation and Training for Employees

- 2.1 All employees will be consulted and communicated with using our normal employee briefing and consultation procedures regarding whistleblowing
- 2.2 The employee induction ensures that employees know how to recognise the following problems, and that they understand the effects they may have on the organisation, their role, and the services provided:
 - (a) Fraud, corruption and malpractice;
 - (b) Abuse or neglect of vulnerable people;
 - (c) Failure to deliver proper standards of service;
 - (d) Damaging personal conflicts at any level;
 - (e) Bullying, discrimination, harassment or victimisation in the workplace; and
 - (f) Failure to adhere to safe working practices;
- 2.3 All employees will receive induction and training so that they are clear regarding what is expected of them, and what practices are regarded as unacceptable. If employees are not sure what to do in a given situation they should ask a member of the Leadership team, or the Chair of the Board of Management, or the Chair of the Audit Committee before taking any action.
- 2.4 If a problem is discovered, it will always be subject to the appropriate level of seriousness. Lincs Rural cannot expect employees to practice higher standards than those that are illustrated by the conduct of the Board of Management, Audit Committee and Leadership Team. Any incident of fraud or abuse will be subject to the disciplinary procedures, reported to the Police and/if necessary through the court process.

3.0 **Confidential Reporting by Employees**

- 3.1 It is never easy to report a concern, particularly one that may relate to a close colleague or member of the Leadership Team. However, all employees or other stakeholders are encouraged to come forward and report any issues.
- 3.2 If employees or stakeholders prefer, they can be accompanied by a colleague, friend, or trade union representative or other advisor to report a concern.
- 3.3 The employee or stakeholder will be protected from any reprisal or victimisation. If employees report an issue they can be confident that this will not affect their career, or enjoyment of their role. This applies equally if an employee comes forward in good faith with an issue that later turns out not to have been justified.
- 3.4 Everything will be done to respect confidentiality and anonymity, if this has been requested. There may be times when this cannot be guaranteed and these will be discussed with the employee or stakeholder.
- 3.5 The action of attempting to discourage employees or stakeholder from coming forward to express a concern will be considered a serious disciplinary offence. In the same way, any employee who criticises or victimises an employee or stakeholder after a concern has been expressed will also be subject to disciplinary action.

4.0 **Employees with Concerns - Who to Contact?**

- 4.1 Depending on the nature of any concerns, employees should in the first instance consider discussing the issue with the Head of Finance, Operations Manager or the Chief Executive.
- 4.2 If for whatever reason an employee or stakeholder feels unable to discuss a concern with any member of the Leadership Team, they can contact the Chair of the Board of Management, Professor David Head.

The contact details are:

Prof. D Head

WhistleblowingChair@lrha.co.uk

- 4.3 For confidential and independent advice, staff may also contact:

Public Concern at Work
3rd Floor, Bank Chambers

6 - 10 Borough High Street
London
SE1 9QQ.
Telephone: 020 7404 6609
Email: whistle@pcaw.org.uk

4.4 It is anticipated that the above options will provide employees or stakeholders with an avenue to raise any concerns in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, but if considered necessary, advice may be sought as appropriate from:

(a) The Association's External or Internal Auditors.

External Auditors are Beever & Struthers:

Ms Stephanie Smith
St Georges House
215 – 219 Chester Road
Manchester
M15 4JE.
Telephone: 0161 832 4901
Email: Manchester@beeverstruthers.co.uk
Website: www.beeversstruthers.co.uk

Internal Auditors are RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP:

Mr Amjad Ali
Suite A
7th Floor
City Gate East
Tollhouse Hill
Nottingham
NG1 5FS
Telephone: 0115 964 4450
Email: Amjad.ali@rsmuk.com
Website: www.rsmuk.com

(b) The Association's Regulator:

Homes England
Apex Court
City Link
Nottingham
NG2 4LA
Telephone: 0300 1234 500
Email: mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk.

(c) The Health & Safety Executive:
Kingsley Dunham Centre
Nicker Hill
Keyworth
Nottingham
NG12 5GG
Telephone: 0115 9712802
Website: www.hse.gov.uk

(d) Lincolnshire Police:
Police Headquarters
PO BOX 999
Lincoln, LN5 7PH
Telephone: 101
Website: www.lincs.police.uk

5.0 Confidential Reporting by Others (Board Members, Tenants, Contractors, Local Authorities, Members of the Public etc)

5.1 Depending on the nature of any concerns, initial contact should be made with the Association's Chief Executive, the Chair of the Board of Management, or the Chair of the Association's Audit Committee (All contact details are available on the Association's website under 'Whistleblowing').

(a) Mr. John D. Howes FRICS
Chief Executive & Secretary
Lincolnshire Rural HA Ltd
Markime House
Pooles Lane
Spilsby
Lincolnshire
PE23 5EY
Telephone: 01790 754219
Email: John@lrha.co.uk

(b) Mrs. Anne McCann
Chair of Audit Committee
c/o Lincolnshire Rural HA Ltd
Markime House
Pooles Lane
Spilsby
Lincolnshire
PE23 5EY
Email: Annemccannlrha@icloud.com

6.0 Dealing with Concerns - All

- 6.1 If any employee or other stakeholder raises a concern, it will be investigated carefully and thoroughly. Any investigation will be conducted on a confidential basis with careful and considered management action..
- 6.2 If requested by any employee or other stakeholder who has raised a concern, then wherever possible the results of the investigation and any resulting proposed action will be shared with them.
- 6.3 If employees or other stakeholders have abused the confidential reporting process, for instance by maliciously raising unfounded allegations, we will treat this as a serious matter, and take appropriate actions **but no one who comes forward in good faith has anything to fear.**

7.0 Access to the Policy

- 7.1 This Policy will be available on SharePoint and the Association's website and will be signposted to tenants, employees and other stakeholders.