

FIRST LIGHT FESTIVAL

Whistleblowing Policy

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Version review history

First Light Festival C.I.C. undertakes to review and update this Policy annually unless there are significant changes in legislation, operations or responsibilities, in which case a revised statement will be issued immediately to all First Light Festival Personnel.

	Date reviewed	Reviewed by (name and role)	Approved by (Director name)
Version 1	22/01/2024	REDACTED Development Manager	REDACTED Director
Version 2			

Context

First Light Festival C.I.C is a Community Interest Company responsible for management and delivery of First Light Festival and affiliated activities.

First Light Festival is a unique weekend of arts, creativity and community that celebrates the first midsummer sunrise in England's most easterly town. Taking place across Lowestoft's beautiful South Beach, Kensington Gardens, and surrounding promenades, the festival centres around a dawn gathering by the shore.

With a hugely diverse programme that encompasses world-class music, new performance, hands-on science activities, comedy, sports, workshops and talks, the festival is free-access and unticketed, with 30,000+ and 35,000+ attending in 2019 and 2022, respectively. With a key focus on shining a spotlight on Lowestoft's talented communities, the festival is deeply rooted in the town, with strong connections to all local schools and colleges, and many of the major community centres, arts venues, business organisations and civic buildings.

Since Summer 2022, First Light Festival C.I.C has been resident at the newly renovated East Point Pavilion, an imaginatively redesigned space within a stunning Victoriana-style glass pavilion overlooking the sea, offering delicious food and drinks from an assortment of independent traders and a varied a year-round schedule of live music, DJs and performances, artisan markets and community-led activity. First Light Festival C.I.C also delivers various projects that promote arts and creativity across East Suffolk, which currently include Framingham Town Youth Challenge.

[The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) protects employees who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters from being dismissed by the Company or from being subjected to detrimental treatment or victimised by either the Company or work colleagues as a result, provided certain criteria are met. The Act makes provision about the kinds of disclosure which may be protected and the circumstances in which disclosures are protected. These rules are therefore intended to comply with the Act by encouraging employees to make disclosures about fraud, misconduct, bribery or other wrongdoing to the Company, without fear of reprisal, so that problems can be identified, dealt with and resolved quickly.

The Company's policy is to support workers who raise protected disclosures. Employees must not victimise, subject to detrimental treatment or retaliate against an employee, worker, agency worker, consultant or contractor who has made a protected disclosure.

Employees are protected provided they reveal information of the right type (known as a "qualifying disclosure") and they reveal that information to the right person and in the right way (known as making a "protected disclosure").

Qualifying disclosures

Certain kinds of disclosure qualify for protection. These are disclosures of information which you reasonably believe are made in the public interest and tend to show one or more of the following relevant failures is either currently happening, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

- a criminal offence, including offences such as theft, fraud or acts of bribery
- the breach of a legal obligation

- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual
- damage to the environment
- deliberate concealment of information tending to show any of the above five matters.

Only disclosures of information that fall within one or more of these six categories qualify for protection.

Your belief must be reasonable, but it need not be correct. It might be discovered subsequently that you were, in fact, wrong or mistaken in your belief, but you must be able to show that you held the belief and that it was a reasonable belief to hold in the circumstances at the time of disclosure. Note that it is not your responsibility to investigate the matter. That is the Company's responsibility.

You must also reasonably believe that your disclosure is made in the public interest. It will therefore not include disclosures which can properly be characterised as being of an entirely personal rather than a wider public interest, for example a disclosure about a breach of the terms of your own contract of employment which does not affect anyone else. In assessing the reasonableness of your belief in this regard, you should be aware that the following factors will be relevant: the number of individuals whose interests your disclosure served, the nature of the alleged wrongdoing, the nature of the interests affected and the extent to which they're affected by the alleged wrongdoing disclosed and the identity of the wrongdoer.

Protected disclosures

For a qualifying disclosure to be a protected disclosure, you need to make it to the right person and in the right way. There are a number of methods by which you can make a protected disclosure, but the Company always encourages all employees, workers, agency workers, consultants and contractors to raise any disclosure internally in the first instance.

You are protected if you make a qualifying disclosure to either:

- the Company, or
- where you reasonably believe that the relevant failure relates solely or mainly to the conduct of a person other than the Company or any other matter for which a person other than the Company has legal responsibility, to that other person.

You are encouraged to raise any qualifying disclosures that you may have by following the disclosure procedure set out below.

If your concern relates to a breach of your own contract of employment which does not affect anyone else, you should use the Company's grievance procedure instead as these types of disclosure are not made in the public interest (as they only affect your own personal interests) and are therefore not covered by this policy.

The disclosure procedure

This procedure applies to all permanent and temporary employees and workers. In addition, third parties such as agency workers, consultants and contractors and any others who perform functions in relation to the Company should use it.

The procedure is as follows:

1. If you wish to make a qualifying disclosure, you should, in the first instance, report the situation in writing to your line manager (or designated Company contact if you are an agency worker, consultant or contractor), setting out in detail the nature of your disclosure. If you do not wish to contact your line manager, you can instead contact an alternative manager.
2. Such disclosures should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed and any action taken expeditiously.
3. All qualifying disclosures will be treated seriously. The disclosure will be promptly investigated and, as part of the investigatory process, you will be interviewed and asked to provide a written witness statement setting out the nature and details of your qualifying disclosure and the basis for it. Confidentiality will be maintained during the investigatory process to the extent that this is practical and appropriate in the circumstances. However, in order to effectively investigate a disclosure, the Company must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed of or interviewed about the disclosure. The Company reserves the right to arrange for another manager to conduct the investigation other than the manager with whom you raised the matter.
4. Once the investigation has been completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and the Company's conclusions and decision as soon as possible. The Company is committed to taking appropriate action with respect to all qualifying disclosures which are upheld.
5. You will not be penalised for raising a qualifying disclosure even if it is not upheld, unless the complaint was both untrue and made with malice.
6. Once the Company's conclusions have been finalised, any necessary action will be taken. This could include either reporting the matter to an appropriate external government department or regulatory agency and/or taking internal disciplinary action against relevant members of staff. If no action is to be taken, the reasons for this will be explained to you.
7. If, on conclusion of the above stages, you reasonably believe that appropriate action has not been taken, you may then report the matter externally to the proper authority in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The Act sets out a number of prescribed external bodies or persons to which qualifying disclosures may be made and you can access these at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>. However, the Company always encourages all employees, workers, agency workers, consultants and contractors to raise their concerns directly in the first instance, rather than externally. This enables issues to be dealt with promptly and speedily.

General principles

- Be aware of the importance of eliminating fraud, misconduct, bribery or other wrongdoing at work. Report anything that you become aware of that is illegal or unlawful
- You will not be victimised, subjected to a detriment or dismissed for raising a protected disclosure under this procedure
- Victimisation of an employee, worker, agency worker, consultant or contractor, or subjecting them to any form of detrimental treatment or retaliation (including bullying and harassment), for raising a protected disclosure under this procedure will not be tolerated by the Company, is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the

seriousness of the offence, it may amount to potential gross misconduct and could result in your summary dismissal

- Be aware that you can also be held personally liable for any act of victimisation or detrimental treatment of an employee or worker on the ground that they made a protected disclosure
- You should immediately draw the attention of your line manager to suspected cases of victimisation or detrimental treatment related to either you or another employee, worker, agency worker, consultant or contractor having made a protected disclosure
- Covering up someone else's wrongdoing is also a disciplinary offence. Never agree to remain silent about a wrongdoing, even if told to do so by a person in authority, such as your line manager
- Your right to make a protected disclosure under this procedure overrides any confidentiality provisions in your contract of employment
- Finally, maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure. If you are a third party, such as an agency worker, consultant or contractor, it could result in your engagement being terminated.

Data Protection

In the implementation of this policy, the Company may process personal data and/or special category personal data collected in accordance with its GDPR and data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which this policy is invoked will only inform the Company for the benefit of implementing this policy. All data is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the Company's GDPR and data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure.