

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a black whistle attached to a black braided cord. The hand is positioned in the upper center of the frame, with fingers wrapped around the cord. The whistle is a metallic, rectangular device with a circular opening at the top. The background is a solid, dark grey or black, creating a high-contrast image. The overall composition is simple and direct, emphasizing the act of blowing a whistle.

WHISTLE- BLOWING POLICY

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING



Whistleblowing Policy			
Last Reviewed	September 2024	Next Review	September 2027
Responsible Officer	Company Secretary		

Policy Statement: We are fully supportive of the principle for reporting, and shall enable our employees or others to report, any form of malpractice within Freebridge.

Freebridge is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability and encourages any employee, contractor, agency worker, home worker, tenant or anyone else who has a serious concern about malpractice in any aspect of the organisation's work to "do the right thing" and come forward and express their concerns.

It may not be possible to deal with concerns under the organisation's normal management procedures, but it is recognised that in some cases individuals may wish to come forward on a confidential basis. The organisation encourages this and wishes to make it clear that they can do so without fear of reprisal or victimisation and that they will get a sympathetic hearing and will not be regarded as disloyal for making their concern known.

Investigations shall be carried out in line with relevant Freebridge policies and procedures, such as the [Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy](#), the [Data Protection Policy](#), Financial Regulations, codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures. If appropriate, cases may be reported to the Police and/or taken through the courts. Investigations shall always be carried out by an individual who has not been involved in the situation; this may be someone from within Freebridge or external to Freebridge. Individuals who may have been involved will not have any undue influence, either on the investigation or on any decisions arising from the investigation.

The outcome of any investigation shall be communicated to the person who made the disclosure.

Policy Detail:

Who to contact if you are an employee

If you are an employee:

- Consider reporting the matter to your immediate manager. If you feel this would be difficult you can report the matter to the Company Secretary on 01553 605544 or the Chief Executive on 01553 667810;
- You can call Protect on 020 3117 2520 or visit [Contact our Advice Line - Protect - Speak up stop harm \(protect-advice.org.uk\)](https://protect-advice.org.uk);
- You can call Fiona Rowe, a Director at TIAA, Freebridge's Internal Auditors, on 0845 300 3333 or email her on fiona.rowe@tiaa.co.uk;
- You can contact the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Donald McKenzie, at donald.mckenzie@freebridge.org.uk.

The Organisation will act reasonably to respect confidentiality. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 gives legal protection to whistle blowers who honestly and reasonably believe the information or allegations they make are true.

Employees should note that disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who knowingly makes a false report of illegal or improper behaviour by someone else.

Tenants, contactors or other interested parties

Tenants, contractors or other interested parties who wish to report a concern, can contact:

- The Company Secretary on 01553 605544 or the Chief Executive on 01553 667810;
- Fiona Rowe, a Director at TIAA, Freebridge's Internal Auditors, on 0845 300 3333 or email her on fiona.rowe@tiaa.co.uk;
- The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Donald McKenzie, at donald.mckenzie@freebridge.org.uk.

Freebridge will treat expressions of concern in the same way as it would an expression of concern from an employee. It will be dealt with fairly, and with confidentiality.

How a reported matter will be addressed

Freebridge will be fair to all parties involved and shall investigate both sides of any reported matter. However, in its investigations the organisation will respect any concerns expressed, for instance for about one's career or even personal safety. It will also act to prevent or minimise any difficulties acting as a result of these arrangements, including the protection of complainants as far as is practicable.

Freebridge shall act in a timely manner.