

Selig Complaints, Concerns and Whistle-blowing Policy

Policy developed by	Policy approved or reviewed by	Date policy approved or reviewed	Policy to be reviewed by	Date for next review
Selig Business Manager	Housing Justice and Selig Board of Trustees	March 2017	Selig Business Manager	September 2018
Selig Business Manager	Selig Business Manager	September 2018	Selig Business Manager	September 2019
Selig Charity Manager	Selig Charity Manager	September 2019	Selig Charity Manager	September 2020
Selig Charity Manager	Selig Charity Manager	September 2020	Selig Charity Manager	September 2021
Selig Charity Manager	Selig Charity Manager	September 2021	Selig Charity Manager	September 2022
Selig Charity Manager	Selig Charity Manager	September 2022	Selig Charity Manager	September 2024

Introduction

The Selig Suffolk Trust (Selig) is committed to providing high quality services in an efficient, effective, and economic way, and within approved budgets.

All Selig Staff, Volunteers, Residents, and Tenants have a responsibility to report concerns - things that are not right, are illegal, or are a neglect of duties. People are often worried about the repercussions of reporting concerns. It can feel uncomfortable, but we promote a culture which values good practice and encourages openness.

Complaints are a valuable source of feedback, helping us understand how and why things go wrong and enabling us to prevent reoccurrence. Where mistakes have been made, we will ensure that appropriate action is taken to rectify them.

What kind of concerns/complaints do we want you to report?

To fulfill our responsibilities, we particularly need to know if:

- Someone's health and safety is in danger.
- There is risk of (or actual) damage to property.
- There is a miscarriage of justice, or the law is being broken.
- Someone is not working within our policies.
- You believe someone is covering up wrongdoing.
- You believe that bullying, harassment, or discrimination is taking place.

How do I report a concern/complaint?

You can report your concern at any time. You can tell us about any issue relating to Selig that worries you. You can report something that has happened, that is happening now or that may happen.

You can:

- Tell a member of staff – in person, by phone, by letter or by email.
- Report anonymously or give your name and request confidentiality.

We will make every effort to protect your identity if you request confidentiality.

What happens if I report a concern/complaint?

- We will listen.
- We may ask for further information.
- Once we have all the information, we need we will decide if any action is required.
- We will report back to you.
- You can tell a Selig Trustee if you are unhappy with how staff have managed your concern.

Whistleblowing

Selig is committed to the highest standards of transparency, probity, integrity, and accountability. We want to ensure that we provide a process for making serious allegations about standards, conduct, financial irregularity, or possible unlawful action in a way that will ensure confidentiality and protect those making such allegations in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so. We want to protect these people from being victimised, discriminated against, or disadvantaged.

Whistleblowing applies to, but is not limited to, allegations about any of the following:

- Conduct which is an offence or breach of the law.
- Alleged miscarriage of justice
- Serious Health and Safety risks
- Unauthorised use of public funds
- Possible fraud and corruption
- Sexual, physical, or verbal abuse,
- Bullying or intimidation of employees, customers, or service users
- Abuse of authority
- Other unethical conduct

Selig recognises that the decision to make a whistleblowing allegation can be a difficult one to make. However, whistle-blowers who make serious allegations in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so have nothing to fear because they are doing their duty.

Selig will take appropriate action to protect a whistle-blower who makes a serious allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so from any reprisals, harassment, or victimisation.

All allegations will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal a whistle-blower's identity unless the whistle-blower otherwise requests. If the allegation results in disciplinary or court proceedings, then the whistle-blower may have to give evidence.

Selig will not, without the whistle-blower's consent, disclose the identity of a whistle-blower to anyone other than a person involved in the investigation/allegation. This encourages whistle-blowers to put their name to an allegation wherever possible as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate/prove.

In exercising discretion to accept an anonymous allegation, the following factors must be considered:

- The seriousness of the issue raised.
- The credibility of the allegation; and
- Whether the allegation can realistically be investigated from factors or sources other than the complainant

No disciplinary or other action will be taken against a whistle-blower who makes an allegation in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so even if the allegation is not substantiated by an investigation. However, disciplinary action may be taken against a whistle-blower who makes an allegation without reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so (e.g., making an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain where there is no element of public interest).

Making a whistleblowing allegation

It is preferable for allegations to be made to the manager to whom they report. However, this may depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of malpractice. For example, if the whistle-blower believes that management is involved it would be inappropriate to raise it directly with them. The whistle-blower may then make an allegation directly to any of the following:

- The Charity Manager
- The Chair of Trustees
- Any other trustee

If any of the above receive an allegation they will consider the allegation and may discuss it with either the Charity Manager or other Trustees.