



**Volunteer
Public Interest Disclosure
& Grievance Guidance**

Within this document the English Bridge Union hereafter will be referred to as the EBU.

The EBU encourages an open culture in all our dealings with staff, volunteers and everyone with whom we come into contact. Effective and honest communication is essential if malpractice is to be effectively dealt with. The document below provides guidelines to all our volunteers, who feel they need to raise certain issues in confidence.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistle Blowing)

Whilst volunteers are not considered workers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, we will treat all individuals making a genuine whistleblowing concern sympathetically, in the spirit of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The EBU will protect volunteers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters from being dismissed from voluntary roles or being subjected to detrimental treatment or victimised by other volunteers or staff members, provided certain criteria are met. Certain kinds of disclosures qualify for protection, and these are set out below. These are disclosures of information which a volunteer reasonably believes are made in the public interest. They tend to show one or more of the following relevant failures is either happening now, 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
- A person not complying with a legal obligation to which they are subject
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate covering up of information tending to show any of the above five matters.

Your protection and confidence

If you raise a genuine concern, you will not be at risk of damaging your position as a result. Provided you are acting in the public interest it does not matter whether your concern proves to be well founded. The EBU does not of course extend this assurance to someone who acts from an improper motive and raises a matter they know to be untrue.

The EBU will not tolerate the victimisation of anyone raising a genuine concern and anyone responsible for such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. You may decide that you want to raise a concern in confidence. Therefore, if you ask for your identity to be protected, it will not be disclosed without your agreement. This document does not cover the situation where information about malpractice is received anonymously. Discretion will be used in the investigation of such information.

How to raise your concern

If you have a concern about malpractice, please contact the EBU CEO. This should be done in writing. It will help if you state the facts of the matter clearly. You can outline how you would like it to be investigated. If you have a direct or personal interest in the matter, you should also tell us at this stage.

If you feel unable to raise the matter to the EBU CEO for whatever reason, please speak to the EBU Office Manager.

If you want to raise the matter in confidence, we will ensure that practical measures are put in place to protect your identity. We will contact you by the most secure means. We will not disclose your identity without your agreement unless we are required to do so by law.

Once you have reported your concern, the EBU will consider it to assess initially what action should be taken. The disclosure will be treated seriously and promptly investigated. As part of the process

any persons whose actions have caused the concern will be interviewed and asked to provide a written statement.

We will give you as much feedback as we properly can. Please note, however, that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we take where this would infringe a duty of confidentiality owed by us to someone else.

Once the EBU has finalised the investigation, any necessary action will be taken. While we cannot guarantee that we will respond to all matters in the way that you might wish, the matter will be handled fairly and properly.

If you are dissatisfied

If you are unhappy with the EBU's response, you may then go to the EBU Vice Chair and request a new investigation.

GRIEVANCE.

The EBU values all its volunteers, and whilst every effort is made to try and keep volunteers in roles that they find satisfying and fulfilling, we recognise that disputes and problems can arise between individual volunteers or groups of volunteers. This document is intended to address problems that arise, both quickly and fairly. This non contractual procedure shall apply to all volunteers of the EBU. The procedure applies equally to an individual grievance or grievance of a group of volunteers, in which case, the group can appoint one of their equals as a spokesperson who will follow the procedure on their behalf, and the answers given will then be deemed to apply to all members of that group. A grievance is personal complaint or problem raised by a volunteer to their organisation about a problem related to their engagement or working conditions.

Raising your grievance: Where possible, you should always try and sort the problem out informally first before taking any further action. You can request a meeting with your committee chair or with the EBU CEO. You could also speak to someone else in the EBU in a position of authority. When you raise your concern and if you are able, provide a suggested solution that might help resolve the problem.

Formal grievance:

If it is not appropriate to raise your concerns informally or this does not resolve your concerns, you should set out your formal grievance in writing giving as full an account of the situation as possible. This should be given to your respective committee chair or with the EBU CEO with any relevant supporting documents.

Grievance meeting:

You will be invited to a meeting to discuss your grievance. You will be informed in advance in writing of the timing and location of the meeting. You will be given the opportunity to explain your grievance. In some cases, the matter can be resolved at that meeting, however it may be necessary to make further investigations. It may be appropriate to speak to you again or others relevant people as part of this further investigation. The volunteer has the right to be accompanied by a friend at the grievance meeting.

If the grievance is against another party, a meeting will also be arranged with that other party to discuss the complaint being made against them. They also have the right to be accompanied by a friend.

Outcome

Once a decision has been reached you will receive a letter detailing the outcome of the grievance.

A volunteer has the right to withdraw their grievance complaint at any stage. They also have the right to end their volunteering when they wish.

Appeal

If a volunteer wishes to appeal against any grievance decision, they must do so, in writing, to the person dealing with the formal procedure within five (5) working days giving full details of why you wish to appeal.

The Office Manager or an independent consultant shall investigate your appeal, if appropriate. You will be invited to attend a further meeting to discuss your appeal.

The appeal decision shall be final and be confirmed to you in writing within 5 working days.