

Adopted by The Leprosy Mission Sweden's Board the 15 September 2022

Whistleblowing policy

The Leprosy Mission Sweden

Organisationsnummer: 875001-4063

Based on The Leprosy Mission International Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

As a Christian organisation The Leprosy Mission always wants to work in ways that glorify God so at all times it seeks to conduct itself honestly and with integrity. We are committed to the highest standards of openness and accountability. Truth and justice are important to God, "I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line;" Isaiah 28:17 and so they are to us.

We believe we have a legal and moral duty to take appropriate measures to identify situations where unlawfulness, misconduct and breaches of policy and procedure have occurred and seek to remedy them. It is important to TLM that any fraud or inappropriate behaviour by staff is reported and properly dealt with. Jesus has called us to be light and salt and this means speaking out against wrong doing as He did. Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Staff members are encouraged to raise genuine concerns about malpractice in the workplace without fear of reprisals. TLM wishes to actively encourage an open and supportive culture in which we all work together for the benefit of our colleagues, beneficiaries and those who come into contact with us.

We are committed to conducting our activities with honesty and integrity, and we expect all staff to maintain high standards of conduct. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing and breaches of expected standards of conduct as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

This policy covers all employees, trustees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, casual workers and agency workers (referred to as staff throughout this policy).

This Whistleblowing policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

Responsibilities

The Global Fellowship Board of Trustees (Legal entity = TLMI Board) has responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

The Global Fellowship Board will nominate a trustee lead for safeguarding, who in collaboration with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), will also oversee bullying, harassment and whistleblowing.

Country Leaders must ensure that all managers and other staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.

The local Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that a confidential record of concerns raised is maintained and they will report as necessary to the Country Leader or local Board Chair.

All TLM Members, the International Office, TLM training and partner organisations receiving TLM funding should either adopt this policy, or produce a policy that imposes equivalent standards, subject to the requirements of local laws. Equivalent local policies must nonetheless provide for reporting of whistleblowing reports to the Global Fellowship Safeguarding Lead, to enable effective oversight in appropriate circumstances. Such reports will delineate between illegal activity; dangerous practices; breaches of the Code of Conduct; concerns in relation to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in respect of staff conduct; and potential reputational issues.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer, in conjunction with the Global Fellowship Board should review this policy from a legal and operational perspective at least once a year, when an incident or event highlights the opportunity for improvement of practices and/or in response to developments in law, regulation and best practice.

All staff are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff are invited to comment on this policy and the procedures and suggest ways in which they might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. This may include:

- criminal activity;
- failure to comply with any legal obligation or regulatory requirements;
- miscarriages of justice;
- danger to health and safety;
- damage to the environment;
- bribery;
- financial fraud or mismanagement;
- breach of our internal policies and procedures, including relevant codes of conduct;
- conduct likely to damage our reputation or financial wellbeing;

- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information;
- negligence;
- bullying, harassment or discrimination of another person;
- the deliberate concealment of any of the above matters.

Matters relating to any kind of safeguarding concern (including in relation to poor practice, abuse or neglect of a child, young person or vulnerable adult) **must** be reported in accordance with the TLM Safeguarding Policy, by escalating the matter to the local designated safeguarding lead (DSL) in your location.

A **whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If you have any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of our activities (a **whistleblowing concern**) you should report it under this policy (or any equivalent local whistleblowing policy).

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases you should use the relevant Grievance Procedure or Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate (and as contained in the in-country HR Handbooks).

If you are uncertain whether something is within the scope of this policy you should seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Officer, whose contact details are at the end of this policy.

Statement of commitments

- We commit to investigate issues raised thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and report the outcome of the investigation back to the staff member who raised the issue in the event that data protection or other obligations in respect of confidentiality do not prevent it.
- We will ensure that no staff member will be victimised for raising a matter under this policy.
- We commit to being open and accountable as an organisation. If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this policy, TLM's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any *appropriate*¹ external measures if, for example, laws have been broken.
- We commit to protecting the innocent: maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.
- We commit to truth and integrity. An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, staff members should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the manager's manager.

Procedure for Raising a Whistleblowing Concern

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases they may refer the matter to the Country Leader or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

¹ The best interests of any victims will be TLM's primary concern in respect of external reporting, considered together with applicable regulatory requirements

However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should contact one of the following:

- The relevant Country Leader;
- The local DSL; or
- in the event that the Country Leader and/or local DSL is unavailable or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason (including any potential conflicts of interest that they may have), the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

The Designated Safeguarding Officer should be informed of any whistleblowing reports by those to whom reports are made (unless inappropriate to do so), so that they can maintain appropriate records and update the Board of Trustees as necessary.

TLM will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a support person to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

We will take down a written summary of your concern and provide you with a copy after the meeting. We will also aim to give you an indication of how we propose to deal with the matter.

Confidentiality

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. However, if you want to raise your concern anonymously, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating your concern to know your identity, we will discuss this with you.

We do not encourage staff to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if we cannot obtain further information from you. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Whistleblowers who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the local DSL or one of the other contact points listed above and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve anonymity.

If you are in any doubt you can seek advice from your local DSL, or independent whistleblowing helplines if they exist in your country (such as Public Concern at Work, the independent UK whistleblowing charity, which offers a confidential helpline (contact details at the end of this policy).

Investigation

All disclosures will be taken seriously and the following procedure will be used, unless urgency of gravity requires otherwise.

- When you raise a concern, please provide copies of any substantiating material that you have access to. Under no circumstances should you investigate your concerns yourself, interview anyone or do anything that may alert the alleged wrongdoer or destroy or interfere with any evidence (save in circumstances where it is necessary in circumstances where harm or an immediate risk of harm has been caused. The safety of all concerned is paramount).
- Once you have raised a concern, we will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. We will inform you of the outcome of our assessment in writing.

This should normally happen within two weeks of the disclosure. You may be required to attend additional meetings in order to provide further information.

- If appropriate, a suitable person (such as a senior member of staff or a local Board member) will be identified to manage the investigation. They will not have any connection to or involvement with or conflict of interest in respect of the matter complained of. This will be someone who is in a position to take any necessary action as an outcome.
- In some cases we may appoint an investigator or team of investigators including staff with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter.
- Where appropriate (in serious incidents), the investigators must notify external authorities as early as possible in their investigation process.
- Investigators must not destroy or interfere with any evidence that may later be required by those authorities in the fulfilment of their functions.
- The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable us to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.
- The investigation report will be reviewed and acted upon by the person managing the disclosure.

Outcome of the investigation

- We will aim to keep you informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent us giving you specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. You should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.
- If the allegation is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken. This could involve initiating a disciplinary process, or informing external authorities if a criminal action has been committed, such as fraud or theft.
- If it is found that there is not sufficient evidence of malpractice, or the actions of the individual(s) are not serious enough to warrant disciplinary action, the manager may take a more informal approach to dealing with the matter.
- As part of the investigation, recommendations for change will be invited from the investigator to enable TLM to minimise the risk of the recurrence of any malpractice or impropriety which has been uncovered. The Country Leader will be responsible for reviewing and implementing these recommendations and sharing learnings with the wider Global Fellowship.

The role of the investigator (to be conducted in accordance with the Grievance Procedure)

Where appointed, the investigator will have the following responsibilities to TLM (subject to the involvement of authorities such as the police or social services):

- Arrange individual interviews with relevant witnesses or individuals.
- Establish the facts/obtain statements/collect documentary evidence.
- Maintain detailed records of the investigation process.
- Make any recommendations for action.

The investigator will have the following responsibilities towards the staff member who raised the disclosure:

- Hold a formal meeting with the employee making the complaint to discuss the matter.
- Keep the employee up to date with progress on the matter, where appropriate.

- Give details of employee support available.

The investigator will have the following responsibilities towards a staff member against whom the disclosure is raised (subject to the involvement of authorities such as the police or social services):

- Inform the individual/individuals about whom the disclosure is made in writing of the disclosure, the seriousness of the allegations, and any supporting evidence.
- Advise in writing of the procedure to be followed.
- Give the person the opportunity to respond in person and in writing to the claims made, and receive and consider any relevant evidence.
- Give details of employee supports available.
- The investigator may also be required to act as a witness at any subsequent disciplinary hearing if required.

Protection and support for whistleblowers

It is understandable that whistleblowers are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. We aim to encourage openness and will support staff who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a reasonable concern. Detrimental treatment includes dismissal, disciplinary action, threats or other unfavourable treatment connected with raising a concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the local Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our Grievance Procedure, or escalate it using the procedure outlined in the safeguarding policy.

False or Malicious Disclosures

TLM will treat all Whistleblowing reports seriously and will protect staff members who raise concerns, believing them to have been truthfully made. However, action will be taken in accordance with the disciplinary policy against any staff member who is found to have made a disclosure maliciously. This means that the staff member knew that the disclosure was not true or did not have reasonable grounds to think that it was accurate. This may result in dismissal. If a staff member has a personal interest in the matter they have raised they must disclose this at the outset.

This procedure is not intended to replace the Grievance Procedure which continues to be the appropriate way to raise grievances related to employment.

External disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator or the police. It is expected that the internal process is allowed to progress without the involvement of the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Many countries operate an independent, confidential helpline (For Example, in the UK there is the independent whistleblowing charity, Public Concern at Work, who also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern in the UK. Their contact details are at the end of this policy).

Whistleblowing concerns usually relate to the conduct of our staff, but they may sometimes relate to the actions of a third party, such as a customer, supplier, service provider or partner. In some circumstances the law will protect you if you raise the matter with the third party directly. However, we encourage you to report such concerns internally within TLM Sweden first. You should contact your line manager, Country Leader or the Designated Safeguarding Officer for guidance.

Contacts

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