



Whistle-blowing

Applicable to: Stoolball England Volunteer Workforce

Date of Origination: June 2005

Effective From: November 2005

Lead Officer: Stoolball England Welfare Officer

Status: **CURRENT**

Approved by the Management Committee on: January 2018

For Review (Annually): Next review: January 2019

APPENDIX 8

Whistle Blowing

Rationale

Stoolball England is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for adults, children, young people and vulnerable adults to participate in Stoolball and recognises its responsibilities to promote a safe environment for any concerns to be reported without fear of reprisal.

Whistle-blowing is an early warning system. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation or within an independent structure associated with it.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects those who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. It makes provision about the kinds of disclosure that may be protected and the circumstances in which disclosures are protected. This policy is therefore intended to comply with the Act by encouraging everyone in Stoolball to make disclosures about fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing to the sport of Stoolball and anyone within it, without fear of reprisal, so that problems can be identified, dealt with and resolved quickly.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of eliminating fraud or wrongdoing and should report anything that they become aware of that is illegal
- No-one will be victimised or dismissed for raising a legitimate matter under this procedure
- Victimisation of a member for raising a qualifying disclosure under this procedure will be a disciplinary offence and dealt with under Stoolball England's disciplinary procedure
- Covering up someone else's wrongdoing is also a disciplinary offence. Never agree to remain about a wrongdoing, even if you are told to do so by a person in authority
- No-one will be penalised for raising a qualifying disclosure even if it is not upheld, unless, in the opinion of the group dealing with this complaint, it is found to be either untrue or made in bad faith
- It is not the responsibility of the person reporting the disclosure to investigate. It is Stoolball England's responsibility to investigate
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with legislation and government guidance. Confidentiality will be maintained during the process to the extent that it is practical and appropriate in the circumstances
- Finally, maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence

Objectives of the Policy

- All club and county members, committee members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of whistle-blowing
- All club and county members, committee England, club or county policy for whistle-blowing and follow it when anything is reported
- All players and parents should know what Stoolball England; club or county policy is on whistle-blowing, and what they should do if legitimate concerns arise
- Individuals should be assured that they will be supported when concerns are reported.

Qualifying Disclosures

Stoolball England would expect members or participants to report any of the following:

- a criminal offence (including fraud)
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- the endangering of an individual's health and safety
- damage to the environment
- deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above.

Where the nature of the disclosure is not included in the above list, it should be made by way of the organisation's Grievance Procedure and/or Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Stoolball Procedures and not under the Whistle-Blowing Procedure.

Your belief must be reasonable, but it need not be correct. It might be discovered subsequently that you were in fact incorrect, but you must be able to show that you held the belief in good faith and that it was a reasonable one to hold in the circumstances at the time.

Disclosure Procedure

1. If you wish to make a qualifying disclosure, you should in the first instance report the situation to an appropriate Stoolball England elected officer.
2. Such disclosures should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed and any action taken quickly.
3. All qualifying disclosures will be taken 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 of it. Confidentiality will be maintained during the process to the extent that it is a practical and appropriate in the circumstances. In order to investigate a disclosure, Stoolball England must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed about the disclosure. Stoolball England reserves the right to appoint another investigator to investigate the disclosure other than the designated person to whom you reported.

4. Stoolball England may ask you to attend a meeting at a reasonable time and place at which your disclosure can be discussed. You should take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting and you have the right to bring with you another appropriate individual of your choice.
5. Once the investigation has been conducted and completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and Stoolball England's conclusions and decision as soon as possible.
6. If you wish to appeal against Stoolball England's decision, you must do so in writing within five working days of the decision. On receipt of an appeal a senior officer or member of the Case Management Group shall make arrangements to hear your appeal. Stoolball England may ask you to attend a meeting at a reasonable time and place at which your appeal can be discussed. You should take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting and you have the right to bring with you another appropriate individual of your choice.
7. Following Stoolball England hearing your appeal, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and Stoolball England's conclusions and decision within five working days.
8. Once Stoolball England's decision has been finalised, any necessary action will be taken. If no action is to be taken, the reasons for this will be explained to you.
9. If, on conclusion of the above states, you reasonably believe that appropriate action has still not been taken, you may report the matter to the proper authority in good faith. The Act sets out a number of prescribed bodies or persons to which qualifying disclosures can be made. However, Stoolball England always encourages members and staff to raise their concerns directly in the first instance, rather than externally. This enables issues to be dealt with promptly and speedily.

Implementation

The implementation of this policy is mandatory and will be supported by an appropriate time-phased Implementation Plan to ensure compliance and effective delivery.

Further Information

For more information and guidance, please visit the Stoolball England website at www.stoolball.co.uk or email info@stoolball.co.uk