



Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy (incorporating Anti-Bribery Statement)

Introduction

It is important that any alleged fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by its employees or officers is reported and properly dealt with. All staff are encouraged to raise any genuine concerns that they may have about a risk, malpractice or wrongdoing at work which may affect students, the public and staff at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

The aim of this Policy is to:

- provide an opportunity for employees to raise genuine concerns internally and receive feedback on any action taken including indicating how the matter can be taken further if there is dissatisfaction with the Trustees' response;
- reassure those reporting concerns that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for confidential reporting (see Appendix 1 for a further explanation of the meaning of confidential);
- put in place relevant support measures for individuals using the reporting procedures.

The objective of this Policy is the facilitation of this aim. By providing suitable arrangements and undertakings, individuals will feel confident that raising a concern is the right decision and that they will not experience any victimisation as a result of making a disclosure. This Policy therefore sets out the way in which individuals may raise any concerns that they have and how those concerns will be investigated and dealt with in a timely and effective manner.

This Policy contains an anti-bribery statement at Appendix 4. Employees and associated persons (as defined in the statement) are expected to report any concerns regarding suspected bribery in accordance with VLC's whistleblowing procedures contained in Appendix 4 of this Policy.

Definitions

'Employee' means any person who has entered into and works under a contract of employment undertaking to do or perform personally any work or service for the VLC, other than a person who is genuinely self-employed;

'Worker' means any person who can be defined as an employee, any volunteers, or who may be under a contractual obligation to a third party to undertake work or service for the VLC.

'Detrimental treatment' includes being disadvantaged, unfairly penalised, disciplined or subjected to any other detriment (including termination of the worker's contract, where he or she is not an employee). A worker has the right not to be subjected to any detriment by his or her employer done on the ground that he or she has made a protected disclosure. In addition, whistleblowers are protected from suffering a detriment, bullying or harassment from another worker;

'Protected disclosure' means the same as a 'qualifying disclosure';

'Qualifying disclosure' means a disclosure which is made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or

- concealment of any of the above;
is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed.

'Whistleblowing' means the making of a protected disclosure which in the reasonable belief of the worker tends to show the type of conduct set out below. VLC's preference is for such matters to be raised confidentially within VLC in accordance with the provisions of this Policy. Such conduct will also include any illegal, immoral, irregular, dangerous or unethical activity under their employer's control. This can cover a broad range of matters, including mismanagement, bribery, fraud and health and safety failures.

Rationale

VLC is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and to tackling wrongdoing. In line with that commitment VLC encourages all of its employees/workers with serious concerns about any aspect of VLC's work to use the Policy to raise those concerns which will be given due consideration and dealt with in an appropriate manner as provided by the legislation in this area and this Policy.

Whistleblowing is important as it encourages openness, transparency and public integrity. It is also important in respect of safeguarding health and safety and protecting against bribery and corruption.

Implementing good practice in the context of whistleblowing will help VLC to comply with the legislation by protecting employees from dismissal and detriment short of dismissal for making a protected disclosure.

Whistleblowing is also critical to quality control, risk management and good governance. It can benefit VLC by the provision of information about problems within the organisation. Employees are often in the best position to know about malpractice within an organisation.

Good practice can encourage employees to make a report about wrongdoing to their employer rather than to a third party. Where an individual makes an internal disclosure, this gives the employer the chance to deal with the matter before it escalates, thereby helping to avoid an embarrassing external disclosure.

Having effective arrangements for reporting concerns about wrongdoing is therefore likely to encourage the supply of information about organisational problems, deter external disclosures and help VLC to demonstrate that it has adequate procedures in place should it be investigated for bribery.

Scope of the Policy

This Policy has been adopted by VLC and applies to all employees and officers of the organisation. Other individuals performing functions in relation to the organisation, such as agency workers and contractors, are encouraged to use it.

It is not necessary for an employee or individual to have proof that such an alleged act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed, a reasonable belief is sufficient. An employee has no responsibility for investigating the matter, it is the responsibility of the Governors to ensure that an investigation takes place.

An employee who makes a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed or to be subjected to any other detriment or victimised, because he/she has made a disclosure.

VLC encourages employees to raise their concerns using the procedures set out in this Policy in the first instance. If an employee is not sure whether or not to raise a concern, he/she should discuss the issue with his/her immediate line manager.

This Policy should not be used to raise issues relating to employment terms and conditions. VLC has procedures in place by which grievances relating to employment can be lodged or a complaint may be made under the bullying and harassment procedures. Equally, there is also a Complaints Policy in place. Employees should be aware that if they decide to raise a concern related to their own employment at an Employment Tribunal, they will be required to raise this as a grievance with their employer in the first instance.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years and updated, as applicable, to ensure that it remains appropriate in the light of any relevant changes to the law, organisational policies or contractual obligations.

Core Principles

Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Employees should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.

Any matter raised under the procedures contained within this Policy will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the employee who raised the issue.

No employee will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the employer will not be prejudiced because he/she has raised a legitimate concern.

Victimisation of an employee for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.

Maliciously making a false allegation will be a disciplinary offence i.e. unfounded allegations where there is no supporting proof and no evidence that shows that the matter actually occurred and that it was made in a way which is motivated by wrongful, vicious, or mischievous purposes.

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, an employee should not agree to remain silent.

If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under the procedures contained within this Policy, VLC's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.

The confidential reporting procedure is intended primarily to cover concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures and in some instances to provide a clear and speedy route for investigation of issues that may inform the disciplinary procedure.

Any employee who makes an allegation that turns out to be unfounded will not be penalised for being genuinely mistaken; if, however, the allegation is proven to have been made with malicious intent, as defined above, then it should be understood that this is a disciplinary offence.

Particular instances of misconduct or wrongdoing may relate to:

- any unlawful act, whether criminal or a breach of civil law;
- maladministration, as defined by the Local Government Ombudsman;
- breach of any statutory Code of Practice;
- breach of, or failure to implement or comply with the Financial Regulations or Standing Orders;
- breach of contract;
- any failure to comply with appropriate professional standards;
- fraud, corruption, dishonesty or the abuse of public funds;
- actions which are likely to cause physical danger to any person, or to give rise to a risk of

- significant damage to property;
- sexual or physical abuse of students or workers;
- loss of income to VLC;
- abuse of power, or the use of VLC's powers and authority for any unauthorised or ulterior purpose;
- discrimination in employment or in the provision of education;
- any other matter which cannot be raised under any other procedure;
- an attempt to cover up any of the above.

The above list is not exhaustive and further advice can be taken from Public Concern at Work, (see Appendix 1) if an employee is unclear as to whether the use of this Policy is appropriate to their particular circumstances.

Where an employee wishes to make a disclosure about possible misconduct by a colleague, Manager or the Principal, or about a health and safety issue, they should follow the procedures laid down in Appendix 1 to this Policy.

Where an employee wishes to make an allegation about safeguarding issues concerning a child, young person or vulnerable adult, they should follow the procedures laid down in the Safeguarding Policy.

Equality Analysis

By virtue of the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, VLC has a duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups;
- foster good relations between people from different groups.

In implementing this Policy and associated procedures, VLC will actively take these aims into account as part of its decision making process and will demonstrate how this has been undertaken.

Where necessary a full equality impact assessment will be undertaken.

Improving the well-being of Children

In implementing his Policy VLC will ensure that it fulfils the requirements of the Children's Act 2004 to improve the well-being of children. VLC aims to ensure that all its students, whatever their background or their circumstances, have the support they need to:

- be healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution;
- achieve economic well-being.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The Trustees and Principal have responsibility for this Policy and for ensuring that:

- appropriate procedures are in place and are implemented;
- any concerns and any action taken are reported to the VLC Trustees; and
- all VLC employees are aware of their rights and duties under the Public Interest Disclosure Act.

The Trustees has overall responsibility for this Policy and for monitoring and evaluating its implementation and impact.

The Trustees will report at the first meeting of the Committee of each academic year whether any

disclosures were made under the procedures appended to this report during the previous year.

At the end of the investigation, the Trustees will, as far as is possible and with due regard to third party rights, inform the employee making the allegation of the outcome. If the decision is that no action be taken, the reasons for this decision will be made known to the employee making the allegation.

Appendix 1: Confidential Reporting Procedures

Disclosure

Any employee knowing or suspecting that another employee, a contractor or any other person connected with VLC is responsible for malpractice or misconduct as outlined in this Policy, must use the procedures set out in this appendix.

Under no circumstances should an employee suspecting malpractice or misconduct inappropriately make the matter public; such an action may itself be considered to be misconduct and expose the employee concerned to disciplinary action.

The preferred procedure to be followed is to contact the immediate line manager or Principal, possibly via another member of staff, and arrange a meeting. The Whistleblowing Form (Appendix 3) may be used.

If the allegation concerns the Principal, the employee should contact the VLC Trustees. Different procedures cover allegations of abuse of children, young people and vulnerable adults and should be used in such cases, including initially reporting all such allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

All communications between the employee making the allegation and VLC on the subject of the allegation will be to the employee's home address, unless otherwise agreed with the employee.

Whistleblowing Form (see Appendix 3):

- The legislation protecting individuals who make a protected disclosure applies not only to employees but also to any person who undertakes to do or perform personally (or otherwise) any work or service for the employer, regardless of the nature of the contractual relationship between them.
- While there is no set method through which an employee must make a protected disclosure, it is good practice to provide a form for him or her to set out the disclosure. This allows VLC to identify an issue as a formal public interest disclosure before invoking its whistleblowing procedure.
- The form also has the advantage of prompting an employee to provide details of his or her concerns, such as examples of the dates and times of when the wrongdoing is alleged to have taken place, and what action the employee would like to see taken. The form may also prompt the employee to think about whether or not the issue is serious enough to warrant invoking the whistleblowing procedure in the first place and allow VLC to distinguish between a genuine public interest disclosure and a personal grievance that would be better dealt with under its grievance procedure.
- The form is also designed to allay any concerns that the employee may have that individuals implicated in the wrongdoing, (for example, his or her line manager) will be involved in the investigation.

Initial Interview

The Principal (or a representative from the VLC Trustees where the allegation concerns the Principal) will arrange an interview with the employee making the allegation. The interview will be arranged at a time and place which will ensure confidentiality and may therefore be held away from the premises.

Where the employee making the allegation agrees, this interview will take place in the presence of a witness. The employee may be accompanied by a work colleague.

The person conducting the interview will take a full note of the allegation. They will provide the employee making the allegation a copy of the note within five clear working days of the interview. They will invite the employee making the allegation to clarify any matter or record a disagreement with the note. They will then ask the employee making the allegation to sign a copy of the note and return it.

Within five clear working days of the interview, the Trustees will write to the employee making the allegation:

- acknowledging that the allegation has been received;
- providing the note of the initial interview;
- giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- outlining whether any initial enquiries have been made;
- clarifying whether further investigations will take place, and, if not, why not;
- where an investigation is to be made, indicating how it will be dealt with and where possible who the investigating officer will be.

Investigation

Where there appears to be some substance in the disclosure, the Trustees will arrange an investigation into the allegation, except where:

- the disclosure suggests criminal activity may be involved, in which case the relevant procedure will apply;
- the allegation concerns weak management rather than malpractice. In this case, with the agreement of the employee making the allegation, the Trustees will report the matter to the Principal and will inform the employee making the allegation that the matter will be handled through the normal line management structure. If the allegation concerns the Principal, the Trustees will undertake the investigation.

The nature of the investigation will depend on the type of allegation ie. police matter (with potential criminal allegations) or internal safeguarding/conduct matter. The Trustees will be advised of the approach to match these circumstances as a consideration of the timings may be necessary. For example if there were a police investigation this might need to be concluded before an internal investigation commences. Once the investigation is able to proceed the Trustees should seek guidance from their HR Provider.

The Trustees may, at his/her discretion seek an external auditor (or appropriately trained or experienced professional) to conduct the investigation.

In some cases the Trustees may consider it appropriate to suspend the employee, who may be the subject of allegations 'without prejudice' to allow the impunity of the evidence being investigated or there is a possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs, which needs to be effectively evaluated and managed in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations. Suspension must not be an automatic response when an allegation is reported. If VLC is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the teacher's family, those concerns should be reported to the LADO or police but suspension is highly unlikely to be justified on the basis of such concerns alone. Suspension should only be considered in a case where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at VLC is or are at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person should not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought being given to the particular circumstances of the case. VLC must consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children at VLC until the allegation is resolved. Advice may be sought from an external HR provider if necessary.

Action

Where the investigation shows there is sufficient case for taking action, the following will apply:

- if the Trustees suspects that a criminal offence has taken place, he/she will inform the police, having taken advice as necessary. In this case, any internal investigation will be postponed until the police investigation and any criminal proceedings which may arise, have been completed;
- otherwise the action to be taken at the end of the investigation will be covered by other policies and procedures, (for example the Disciplinary Policy) and will not be dealt with

here.

Response

The length of time over which the investigation will be carried out will vary, but should be as short as is consistent with a thorough approach. If the investigation is prolonged, the Trustees will report to the employee making the allegation at regular intervals. All allegations must be investigated as a priority so as to avoid any delay. Target timescales are shown below for different actions in the summary description of the process. The time taken to investigate and resolve individual cases depends on a variety of factors including the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation, but these targets should be achieved in all but truly exceptional cases. It is expected that 80 per cent of cases should be resolved within one month, 90 per cent within three months, and all but the most exceptional cases should be completed within 12 months.

For those cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unfounded or malicious then it is expected that they should be resolved within one week. Otherwise it may need a full investigation to determine this. Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the Trustees to deal with it, although if there are concerns about child protection, the Trustees/Principal should discuss with the LADO. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Principal should institute appropriate action within 3 working days.

At the end of the investigation, the Trustees will, as far as is possible and with due regard to third party rights, inform the employee making the allegation of the outcome. If the decision is that no action be taken, either because the allegation has not been made out or it concerns weak practice, the reasons for this decision will be made known to the employee making the allegation.

Appeal

Depending on the nature of the matter raised, if the employee reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, he/she may consider reporting the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:

- HM Revenue & Customs;
- the Financial Services Authority;
- the Office of Fair Trading;
- the Health and Safety Executive;
- the Environment Agency;
- the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, click <https://contact.ofsted.gov.uk/onlinecomplaints>
- the Director of Public Prosecutions; and
- the Police/Serious Fraud Office.

Safeguards

Harassment or Victimisation

VLC recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make not least because of fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice. VLC will not tolerate harassment or victimisation in any form and will take action and put in place support measures to protect employees who raise a concern. Disciplinary procedures are already in place to address any potential attempts at harassment or victimisation.

It is accepted by VLC that employees may feel concerned that by raising areas of concern, their future careers may be detrimentally affected. This will not be the case and those raising concerns in the public interest can be assured that those concerns will be treated with the utmost respect and will play no part in future decisions related to an employee's progress or promotion.

If an employee who raises a concern is already the subject of disciplinary, redundancy or similar procedures, confidential reporting will not halt these procedures but every effort will be made on

the part of the investigating officer to ensure that the issues are not inter-related or connected in any way.

Confidentiality

All efforts will be made to protect an employee's identity when they raise a concern and do not want their name to be disclosed; however, it must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a written statement by the employee may be required as part of the evidence, especially if the next step is a police investigation and prosecution.

Anonymous Allegations

VLC accepts that employees will raise genuine concerns that are based on factual evidence or direct observation. With this in mind, employees are encouraged to put their names to any allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful and far more difficult to investigate and prove, however, they will be considered at VLC's discretion.

In deciding whether to investigate an anonymous allegation, it will be necessary to consider the seriousness of the allegation, its validity and whether evidence can be obtained in order to proceed with an investigation. In making this consideration the factors to be taken into account would include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from other sources in the face of a denial from the accused person(s).

Untrue Allegations

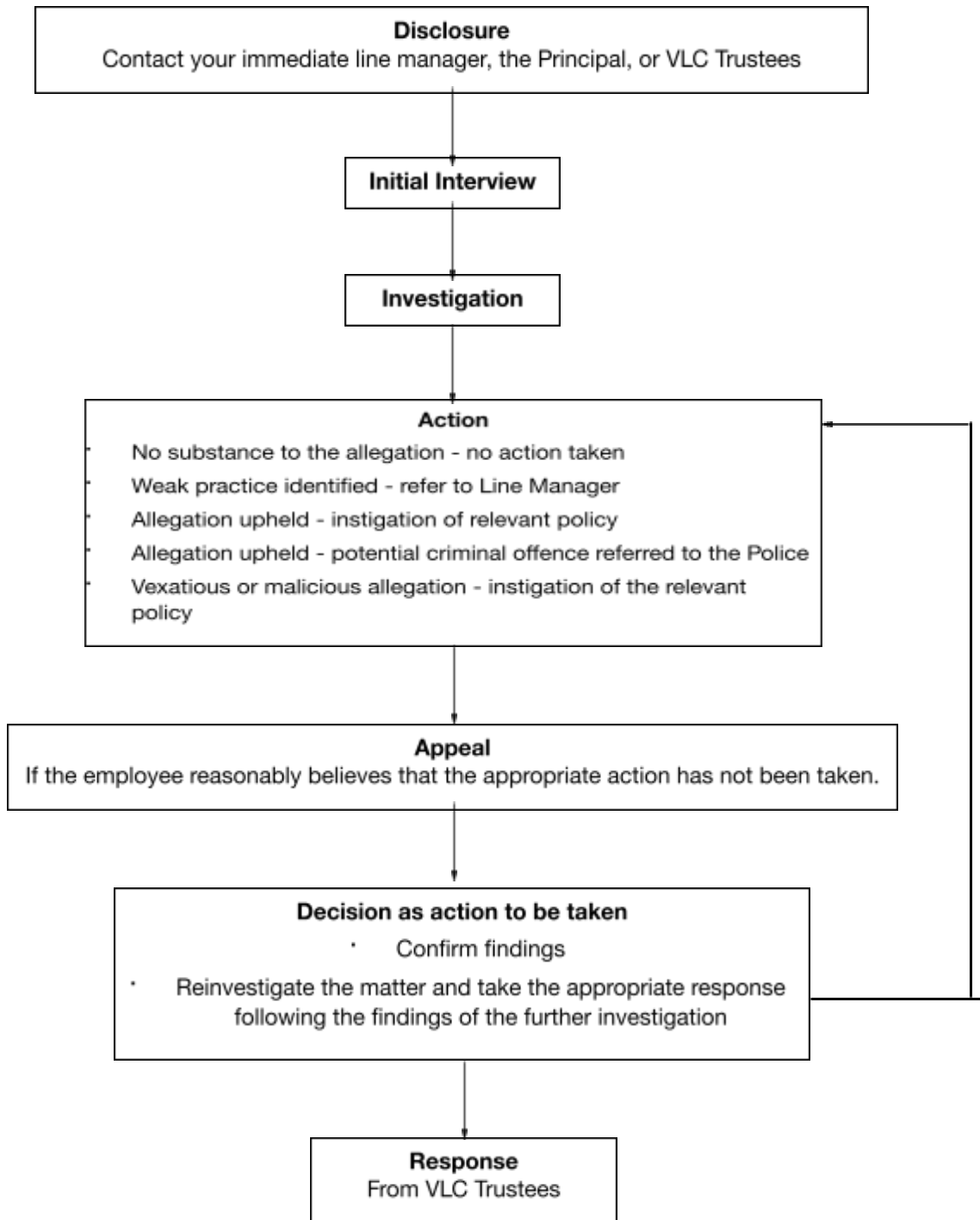
If employees make an allegation without personal gain, which is based on evidence, observation or a series of unexplainable instances, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against that employee who will be fully supported after the event. If, however, employees make malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken.

Equally, if malicious allegations are made against the employee, VLC will ensure that the employee is fully supported and that appropriate disciplinary action is taken against the person making the malicious allegations.

Further Information for Employees

There may be circumstances when employees wish to seek independent advice before raising a concern internally. The charity Public Concern at Work (PCaW) provides free confidential advice to workers who have concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace and can be found at www.pcaw.co.uk / whistle@pcaw.co.uk.

Appendix 2: Confidential Reporting Procedure - Internal Procedures Flowchart



Appendix 3: Whistleblowing Form

Making a Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)

Guidance

This form is intended for use by any individual working in VLC, (including contractors, agency workers and volunteers) who wishes to raise an issue about wrongdoing. This form should be used to report wrongdoing within the VLC, (for example, financial irregularities or health and safety concerns), rather than to raise a personal grievance (for example, if you would like to make an allegation of bullying or harassment, or are complaining that your contract of employment has been breached).

If you are unsure about whether your concerns are best dealt with under the Whistleblowing Policy or Grievance Procedure, please read the Whistleblowing Policy, which provides examples of the issues that should be reported using this form. If, having read the Whistleblowing Policy, you remain unsure about which procedure to use, please consult the VLC Trustees for further advice.

Once you have submitted this form, the whistleblowing procedure will be invoked. This will result in an investigation, which could involve anyone, (for example, your line manager) you may have implicated below.

In certain circumstances, you can request that your concerns be kept anonymous. Where possible, the organisation will respect a request for anonymity, but cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so. This form should be completed and delivered to the VLC Trustees in an envelope marked "confidential" or sent as an email attachment with "confidential" in the subject line.

Formal Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)

Employee's Name	
Employee's Job Title	
Employee's Department	
Does your public interest disclosure relate to your line manager?	Yes / No

Summary of Disclosure

Please set out the details of the issue that you wish to raise, providing examples where possible, particularly dates, times, locations and the identities of those involved. You may attach additional sheets if required.

Please provide the names and contact details of any people involved in your concerns, including witnesses.

Please set out how you would like to see the issue dealt with, and why and how you believe that this will resolve the issue.

Declaration

I confirm that the above statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I understand that, if I knowingly make false allegations, this may result in the organisation taking disciplinary action against me.

Form completed by:

Signature

Date

For completion by VLC

Date form recieved

Name of recipient and job role

Signature

Appendix 4: Anti-Bribery Statement

Introduction

The Bribery Act 2010 introduced a new, clearer regime for tackling bribery. This anti-bribery statement sets out the policy for dealing with bribery or suspected bribery, namely the prohibition of any form of theft, fraud, bribery or corrupt practices, whether covered directly by the Bribery Act 2010 or not.

VLC is committed to maintaining an honest, open and constructive culture so as to best fulfil its objectives. It is therefore committed to the elimination of theft, fraud, bribery and corruption, to the rigorous investigation of any such allegations and to taking appropriate action against wrong doers, including possible criminal prosecution.

The overall aims of this statement are to:

- assist in promoting a climate of openness and a culture and environment where staff feel able to raise concerns sensibly and responsibly;
- set out VLC's responsibilities in terms of the deterrence, prevention, detection and investigation of bribery and corruption;
- ensure the appropriate sanctions are considered following an investigation, which may include any or all of the following:
 - criminal prosecution;
 - civil prosecution;
 - internal/external disciplinary action (including professional/regulatory bodies).

All employees should be aware that theft, fraud, bribery and corruption will normally be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence which will be addressed in accordance with procedures.

Definitions

'Bribery' means the taking of an inducement for an action which is illegal, unethical or a breach of trust. Inducements can take the form of gifts, loans, fees, rewards or other advantages. A bribe might be taken in order to gain any commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the VLC or the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

'Corruption' means the offering or acceptance of inducements, gifts, favours, payment or benefit-in-kind which may influence the action of any person. Corruption does not always result in a loss. A corrupt person may not benefit directly from their deeds; however, they may be unreasonably using their position to give some advantage to another. It is a common law offence of corruption to bribe the holder of a public office and it is similarly an offence for the office holder to accept a bribe.

Rationale

Bribery is a criminal offence for both individuals and commercial organisations and can be punished with imprisonment of up to 10 years or unlimited fines.

VLC will not commit an offence of failing to prevent bribery, if it can show that it had 'adequate procedures' in place to prevent bribery.

Scope

This statement applies to all employees regardless of position held, as well as those acting on behalf of the employer, including the Trustees, other volunteers, temporary workers, consultants, contractors, and/or any other parties who have a business relationship with VLC. It will be brought to the attention of all employees, volunteers and Trustees and will form part of the induction process for new staff and volunteers

VLC has procedures in place that reduce the likelihood of theft, fraud, bribery or corruption occurring. These include documented policies and procedures, including whistleblowing and risk assessment.

Core Principles

VLC operates a zero tolerance attitude in respect of theft, fraud, bribery and corruption.

All staff have a personal responsibility to protect VLC from theft, fraud, bribery or corruption, are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of business conduct and are expected to behave honestly and with integrity.

In the event that a member of staff becomes suspicious that theft, fraud, bribery or corruption is being committed, they are fully authorised to take immediate action to prevent further or to secure evidence. Any such action should be reported to senior management. Where such action or reporting is not possible the Whistleblowing Policy should be used to report the matter.

If it subsequently becomes clear that those suspicions and actions were ill founded, then VLC will not discipline the member of staff concerned, unless it is considered that the action was motivated by personal animosity.

Individuals must not communicate directly with any member of the press, media or any other third party about a suspected act of theft, fraud, bribery or corruption, but should address any such concerns in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

All gifts, payments or any other contribution received, whether in cash or in kind, shall be documented, regularly reviewed, and properly accounted for.

VLC will procure goods and services ethically and transparently with the quality, price and value for money determining the successful supplier/contractor, not by receiving (or offering) improper inducements.

VLC prohibits employees and associated persons from offering, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe in any way, or to give, or be perceived to have given, a financial or other advantage to any person, (whether a UK or foreign public official, political candidate, party official, private individual, private or public sector employee or any other person) in order to induce that person to perform his/her functions or activities improperly.

VLC may, in certain circumstances, be held responsible for acts of bribery committed by intermediaries acting on its behalf such as subsidiaries, clients, business partners, contractors, suppliers, agents, advisors, consultants or other third parties. The use of intermediaries for the purpose of committing acts of bribery is therefore prohibited.

Facilitation payments are prohibited under the Bribery Act like any other form of bribe. They shall not be given by VLC or its employees in the UK or any other country.

This statement is not intended to prohibit appropriate corporate entertainment and / or hospitality undertaken in connection with VLC's business activities, provided the activity is customary under the circumstances, is proportionate, and is properly recorded / disclosed as set out in the Financial Regulations.