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Scottish Queer International Film Festival Whistleblowing Policy

ABOUT SQIFF

SQIFF (Scottish Queer International Film Festival) was formed with the aim of adding to the exciting and growing amount of queer film stuff happening around Scotland. Since 2015, we have held an annual Festival in Glasgow alongside providing year round events across various locations. SQIFF aims to build community through queer films. Our goal is to get people watching, talking about, and making more queer films. We want to screen movies that people might not otherwise get a chance to see and create inspiring and informative events across Scotland. Moreover, we want to support marginalised groups within the LGBTQIA+ community by providing a networking system for queer filmmakers, as well as filmmaking workshops for audiences wanting to start on the medium. We want to challenge inequalities and barriers to accessing the arts.

This Whistleblowing Policy outlines SQIFF's commitment to ensuring the care and wellbeing of its audiences, staff, participants, and volunteers.

This Whistleblowing Policy includes information on:

- [Policy Statement](#)
- [Purpose](#)
- [Principles](#)

POLICY STATEMENT

Scottish Queer International Film Festival (SQIFF) is an organisation formed to support whistleblowing in the area of LGBTQIA+ film exhibition. As such, SQIFF is fully committed to supporting whistleblowing in all its activities, including its public events and persona and in all its other dealings. SQIFF is committed to being open, honest and accountable. This whistleblowing policy aims to help staff, volunteers and Trustees to raise any serious concerns they may have about colleagues or managers in confidence and without concern about being harassed, discriminated against or bullied in any way as a result.

PURPOSE



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The purpose of this policy is to ensure whistleblowing is an accessible option to all in SQIFF's employment, all who access SQIFF's services, and all with whom SQIFF has dealings. It lays out our specific commitments to whistleblowing and makes SQIFF responsible to the public as well its employees, voluntary staff, and audience members for acting on those commitments. SQIFF understands whistleblowing as a situation in which an individual reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Whistleblowers are protected by law under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Under this law, whistleblowers must not be treated unfairly or lose their job because they report suspected wrongdoing. Whilst SQIFF regularly employs freelancers, SQIFF commits to not treating whistleblowers unfairly. Whistleblowers will continue to be protected regardless of whether their concerns prove to be founded or unfounded.

This policy intends to deal with serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a failure in the protection of children or vulnerable adults
- a miscarriage of justice
- a health and safety risk to an individual
- damage to the environment
- or concealment of the above.

PRINCIPLES

Our whistleblowing strategies are intended to build an environment where staff feel valued, respected and cared for when engaged in whistleblowing with SQIFF.

Our commitment to whistleblowing includes:

Employees and volunteers

- Provide information on SQIFF's whistleblowing process.
- Ensure SQIFF's whistleblowing process is documented and easily accessible for all staff.
- Ensure SQIFF's commitment to taking whistleblowing seriously is evident in communication with staff.



- Where possible, allow whistleblowers to disclose information in confidence and remain anonymous.
- Stress that no disciplinary action will be taken against whistleblowers if disclosures are made in good faith.
- Commit to continuously evaluating how SQIFF's working conditions and organisational policies are supporting whistleblowing.

SQIFF's whistleblowing procedure is as follows:

1. When to Raise a Concern

Raise a whistleblowing concern as soon as possible. Staff members and volunteers do not need to wait for proof when reporting wrongdoing: they only need to have a reasonable concern. It is not for them to investigate or prove that their concerns are justified.

'Blow the whistle' if you have a concern, that you reasonably believe is of public interest, about the conduct of others in the organisation or the way in which the organisation is run.

2. How to Make a Disclosure

Where possible whistleblowers should make their disclosure in writing. If made verbally, it is advised to follow up in writing.

Include:

- any relevant context and background, including relevant dates, venues, names etc.
- give specific examples of any wrongdoing that you are personally aware of.
- state clearly the reason why the situation gives causes for concern.

This helps to ensure problems can be resolved as quickly, efficiently and effectively as possible. Whistleblowers should make clear that they are making a disclosure using the whistleblowing policy and whether they wish their identity to be kept confidential.



3. Confidentiality of Disclosures

Every effort will be made to keep the identity of an individual making a disclosure confidential provided that this is compatible with a proper investigation. Depending on the circumstances of the case it may not always be possible. Where this is a reality, whistleblowers will be informed of this and the reasons why it was not possible.

4. Who to Report to

Usual reporting channels should be assumed when making whistleblowing disclosures. Therefore, in most cases you should discuss any concerns you have with your line manager or main point of contact. Where this is not possible, or if you have done so and are not satisfied, you should make a whistleblowing report to your line manager's manager or someone more senior.

If you are unable to report to any of the parties already mentioned, you can report directly to SQIFF's Director, or someone else within the organisation you trust. In cases where the concern includes this individual you should report it to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Trustees.

5. Handling of Disclosures

Whistleblowers will receive confirmation of their report within three working days. It is then likely an investigation will follow and they will be asked to attend a meeting to explain the disclosure in full.

They will be told either at the meeting or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address the report they have made. Where action is not taken, they will be informed and given an explanation.

The action taken in response to a disclosure will depend on the nature of the concern. Typically, the matters raised may result in one or more of the following:

- no action required.
- action being taken under other policies.
- an internal investigation under this policy.
- a referral to the police or relevant statutory body.
- a referral to external auditors.



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- a referral to the Charity Commission.
- an independent enquiry.

6. *Anonymous Reports*

In view of the protection afforded to an individual raising a genuine concern, it is considered desirable that they disclose their personal information.

However, anonymous disclosures will be accepted and treated as equally as those bearing a name. When receiving an anonymous report:

- a decision will be made about whether it is possible to pursue the report based on the information provided.
- a complete and comprehensive investigation will be more challenging as there is no option to seek further information or clarification.
- it will not be possible to share any outcome or actions from an investigation.

This policy was last reviewed on 05/12/2024. We welcome any comments and suggestions that can help us to develop our Whistleblowing Policy: info@sqiff.org.