Whistleblowing

Policy and Procedure

Version	By Author	Reason	Modification Date	Date Ratified	Date for Review
1	NB & EV	New Policy	22/10/26	6/11/26*	6/11/27
2					
3					
4					

*ratified via email between board meetings

Quench Arts CIC requires directors, employees, freelance staff and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of the Quench Arts, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations. We expect all who work with us to adhere to our vision, mission and values (see Appendix 1). Quench Arts Musical Connections is committed to welcoming everyone and acting with honesty and care. We want anyone involved with us to feel safe in raising a concern.

Reporting Responsibility
This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees, freelance staff and others to raise serious concerns internally so that Quench Arts can address and correct inappropriate conduct and actions but, where needed, ensuring that whistleblowers who need to report a concern externally have the relevant information to do so. It is the responsibility of all board members, Directors, employees, freelance staff and volunteers to report concerns about violations or suspected violations of law or regulations.

Whistleblowing definition
Whistleblowing covers qualifying disclosures of workplace wrongdoing. Under UK law (governed by the Employment Rights Act 2025 and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998), a disclosure must reasonably be believed to show one or more of the following categories:

- Criminal offences (such as fraud, corruption, or theft)
- Breaches of a legal obligation
- Health and safety dangers to any individual
- Environmental damage
- Sexual harassment
- Safeguarding failures
- Deliberate concealment of wrongdoing in any of these areas

What Is Not Covered
Whistleblowing does not cover personal workplace grievances and complaints - such as a single instance of bullying, a personality clash, or a standard complaint about individual terms of employment. Personal

complaints are instead handled through Quench Arts' Grievance and Complaints Policy.

Reporting Procedure
Quench Arts has an open door policy and suggests that employees, freelance staff, volunteers or other stakeholders share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with the Executive Directors. If you are not comfortable speaking to the Executive Directors, or you are not satisfied with their response, you are encouraged to speak with a non-executive board member (quenchartsboard@gmail.com).

Executive Directors are required to report complaints or concerns about suspected ethical and legal violations in writing to the Quench Arts Board, which has the responsibility to investigate all reported complaints. Any concerns that arise will be formally minuted within quarterly meetings and, where necessary, extraordinary meetings must be held to deal with the concerns.

For serious matters that need to be reported to external bodies, there are different reporting procedures depending upon the category of concern:

- For Criminal offences (such as fraud, corruption, or theft): Whistleblowers must contact the Police and Companies House https://www.gov.uk/complain-company
- For Breaches of a legal obligation, including safeguarding: Whistleblowers must contract Companies House directly https://www.gov.uk/complain-company and/or any main funders of the relevant programme. Current main funders of Quench Arts' work are: The National Lottery Community Fund - https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/our-policies/fairness-and-transparency/raising-a-concern and Youth Music - https://www.youthmusic.org.uk/contact-us
- For Health and Safety dangers to any individual where Quench Arts has not acted in an appropriate manner: Whistleblowers must contact the Health and Safety Executive https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/whistleblowers.htm
- For Environmental damage: Whistleblowers must contact the Environment Agency https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency
- For Sexual harassment: Whistleblowers must follow initially Quench Arts' Grievance and Complaints Policy and/or contact the Police.
- For any deliberate concealment of wrongdoing in any of the areas listed above: Whistleblowers must contact Companies House directly https://www.gov.uk/complain-company
- Any whistleblower may also contact the executive directors on info@quench-arts.co.uk initially. Where the concern is about the executive directors, or where the whistleblower is unhappy with the response from the executives, the non-executive board members can be contacted directly on quenchartsboard@gmail.com.

Acting in Good Faith
Anyone filing a written complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing that the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or are knowingly false will be viewed as a serious offense and relevant steps will be decided by the board on a case by case basis regarding this.

No Retaliation
It is contrary to the values of Quench Arts for anyone to retaliate against any board member, director, employee, freelance staff or volunteer who in good faith reports an ethics violation, or a suspected violation of law, such as a complaint of discrimination, or suspected fraud, or suspected violation of any regulation governing the operations of Quench Arts. An employee or freelance member of staff who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Quench Arts is a learning organisation and will reflect upon its practice and procedures as and when any concern is raised.

Confidentiality
Violations or suspected violations may be submitted to the board on a confidential basis by the complainant. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations
The Quench Arts Board will notify the person who submitted a complaint and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation. All reports will be promptly investigated and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation. Any whistleblowers will receive a response to their concern within ten working days.

APPENDIX 1 - QUENCH ARTS' MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Our Vision

That everyone should have access to high quality participatory arts opportunities.

Our Mission

To use music and the arts to make a real difference to people's lives, nurturing artistic talent in areas where opportunities may be limited and supporting other organisations in developing their community arts practice to widen reach.

Our Core Aims

A Sense of Belonging: Our aim is for all of our participants and staff to feel a sense of belonging when involved in Quench Arts and our projects. We want to help individuals find purpose and connection in a safe space created by the people and for the people involved with us, nurturing souls, hearts and minds through creativity and music. Our programmes will be steered by our users and stakeholders and their ongoing development and refinement will be informed through stakeholder feedback and evaluation.

Creativity at the Heart: Our artistic focus will be on creating original work with participants, enabling personal expression. Our music facilitation will support participants to create original music based on their individual needs, interests and aspirations. We may use existing materials, such as cover songs, to build musical skills and awareness of forms and structures, or to help understand our participants' musical identity and taste from reference tracks, but our focus will always be on creativity, and supporting the devising of original music or of new interpretations or arrangements of established repertoire. This is because we want our participants to feel ownership of their work, and because we believe the creation of original music and lyrics best supports emotional literacy (the ability to talk about and express feelings and emotions).

Supporting Progression: Our activities will focus on longer term participation. Through our projects we aim to offer consistent support and provision to encourage lifelong musical engagement for the wellbeing benefits this can provide. We support participant progression through our opportunities in regards to musical, personal and social skills and, where relevant, enable participants to take up peer volunteering, mentoring and/or advisory group roles with us, to help steer the projects they are involved in and to support new members. Our sessions will be enabling and empowering. When and where appropriate, we will signpost participants to progress to mainstream provision and/or opportunities delivered by other arts organisations. We will also support the development and progression of our workforce.

Our Values

Addressing Need: We want our projects to address an identified need, working together with local communities and partners across the West Midlands to achieve the best outcomes for our participants.

Where appropriate, our projects may be targeted to benefit specific disadvantaged individuals and communities, or areas/genres where opportunities may be limited.

Partnership and Collaboration: We work in partnership with Music Education Hubs, Health and Wellbeing organisations and local community groups to ensure our projects address a need. We value and use the different skills and strengths of partners to help make a positive impact. We view our participants as partners too and encourage them to input into the development and direction of our activities/projects.

Quality: We have quality at the heart of all we do, right from the planning stage of a project through to its culmination and evaluation. We use highly experienced facilitators to lead activity, to inspire participants and support progression, and have high expectations for all our participants.

Sustainability and Legacy: We value quality and depth of engagement over numbers reached. Our projects will always consider sustainability, legacy and signposting opportunities for participants from the outset.

Supporting and Developing our Team: We provide professional development opportunities and mentoring support to artists working in communities according to our vision. This helps us to continue to build a strong, effective, committed and loyal workforce. Our team are our strength and we want to nurture and support them as well as we do for our participants.

Learning and Sharing: We value honest and open evaluation, even when things haven't gone so well, and are happy to share our learning with others. Through our Quench-ology strand, we offer consultancy services to like-minded organisations and individuals around research, project development, fundraising, project management, evaluation; training and mentoring, supporting others with our knowledge and experience.