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Institution of Agricultural Engineers

Whistleblowing Procedure

G13 – Whistleblowing Procedure

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Introduction

Members of the Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE) are required to uphold the reputation of the Institution and the industry it serves, safeguard the public interest, observe the governing rules and regulations and comply with the Code and Rules of Professional Conduct.

The main aim of this procedure is to support members who raise concerns about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing which affects others ('blow the whistle') – point 7 on the Code and Rules of Professional Conduct.

What is Whistleblowing?

'Whistleblowing' is defined by the UK Whistleblowing Commission as 'the raising of a concern, either within the workplace or externally, about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing which affects others'. There are potentially serious public and personal consequences if any engineer or engineering technician does not raise a concern. Whistleblowing is not the same as raising a complaint.

Laws protecting whistleblowing vary widely from country to country and members with concerns should be encouraged to make themselves aware of the prevailing legal protection and obligations if they are operating in other jurisdictions.

IAgrE Whistleblowing Process

1. The obligation for a member to "blow the whistle" (i.e. raise a concern about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrong doing which affects others) is included in the Engineering Councils Guidelines for Institution Codes of Conduct. IAgrE adopts this code and draws it to member's attention. Furthermore, IAgrE adopts this code and applies it to Society for the Environment registrations.
2. Continued registration (and IAgrE membership) obliges members to conduct their professional lives in accordance with the IAgrE Code and Rules of Professional Conduct, and to take appropriate action or speak out when they observe something which is not consistent with Code.
3. Where a member is aware of a concern about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrong doing which affects others, they are obliged to raise this and a failure to do so may lead to disciplinary procedures which could, in the most serious cases, lead to an individual being denied IAgrE membership and where relevant, being removed from the Engineering Council register. This applies to all grades of membership and all levels of Engineering Council and Society for the Environment registration.

4. In line with Engineering Council Guidance, it is noted that some aspects of the Policy Statement and Guidance Note on Whistleblowing will not apply to members of the Armed Forces and those involved in protecting national security who are not protected by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
5. Where a concern about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrong doing which affects other is raised, this will be dealt with through the routine IAgrE Disciplinary and Appeals Procedures described herein.
6. Members who “blow the whistle” must, in the first instance discuss their concern with the IAgrE Chief Executive and Secretary. If the subject of the concern is the IAgrE Chief Executive, the member should take their concern to the IAgrE President, President Elect or Immediate Past President.
7. The IAgrE will support those members concerned about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrong doing which affects others as follows:
 - Signposting individuals to organisations expert in providing whistleblowing advice.
 - Proactive approach in publicising and promoting good practice including advice through the members Journal about how to respond in whistleblowing situations.
 - The IAgrE executive Committee will, where needed, appoint a sub group to act as an Ethics Committee
 - In the case of a safe and confidential sounding board for any member who has a technically based concern, the IAgrE Ethics Committee will refer the matter to an appropriate external organisation.

Support for members from the IAgrE

Support may be proactive and generic or reactive to an individual member with a specific concern. IAgrE will not provide support for non-technical, non-engineering matters, such as HR.

Support may include:

- Signposting members to organisations expert in providing whistleblowing advice – Department for Business, Innovation and Skills - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/510962/BIS-16-79-blowing-the-whistle-to-a-prescribed-person.pdf
- Publicising and promoting good practice for members and companies
- Providing a safe/confidential sounding board for any member who has a concern
- Providing access to a mentor

The IAgrE charitable status prevents us from providing members with representation in the event of action being taken against them by the state, their employer or any other organisation.

Members should not suffer any detrimental treatment for a raising a concern with the Institution.