

Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure

Date:	June 2023
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The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Storyy Homes supports and works with children, young people, and adults as part of its activities. We are driven to make our settings the best they can be and strive to continuously improve using feedback to do this. This policy sets out our approach to acknowledging, responding, resolving, and learning from both feedback and complaints.

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy applies to all services within Storyy Homes and sets out our approach to acknowledging, responding, resolving, and learning from both feedback and complaints.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the framework Storyy Homes operates to ensure those who wish to feedback or complain know how to do so, and where to go if they feel we have not resolved the matter adequately. It outlines how we address complaints, ensuring a clear, consistent approach is followed.
- 1.3. There may be occasions where the nature of the complaint or feedback may necessitate Storyy Homes to investigate the concerns raised under our safeguarding or grievance procedures. In these circumstances these policies will supersede the complaints and feedback policy.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1. Storyy Homes wants to hear the views of children and young people about its services and recognises the right of young people to make a complaint when we fall short of their expectations. Staff within all settings should be engaging children in the day-to-day activities and running of the home.
- 2.2. We view feedback and complaints as a valuable resource to help improve our services. The success of Storyy Homes depends on our ability to deliver excellent services and we can only do this if we receive, listen to and act on feedback. Children should feel that they contribute to decisions around the home and staff should explain any decisions made that are not agreed with by a child.
- 2.3. We are committed to ensuring our young people and others who wish to feedback or complain know how to do so by providing information on our website and provide user friendly literature in a variety of ways for young people.
- 2.4. Where appropriate, we will collaborate with partner agencies to facilitate the effective and early resolution of complaints. Where complainants are young people using our services, we will support them through the complaints process.
- 2.5. We aim to resolve complaints openly and promptly wherever possible. This could mean

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an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action to resolve the problem. If we cannot resolve a complaint, we will explain why. If a complainant is still dis-satisfied, they can have their complaint investigated formally.

3. Definitions

What is a complaint?

Incidents or allegations around mistreatment or harm by staff must be dealt with in line with the safeguarding referral process not as a complaint. A complaint should be made where all other reasonable methods of resolving an issue have been tried and have failed, or where the complainant believes they would fail.

3.1. Storyy Homes has adopted the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint, "Any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting individual residents or groups of residents."

3.2. Complaints defined within this policy and procedure will relate to incidents or issues that occur within 3 months of raising the complaint and relate to:

- A failure or delay to deliver a service or standards of service delivery relating to support, care and/or accommodation including an assessment.
- Failing to comply with policy and / or procedure
- The behaviour or attitudes of staff, volunteers or a contractor working on our behalf
- A disagreement with decisions made by Storyy Homes in the course of our work which the complainant feels are unfair or unclear to them.
- Poor quality of maintenance (repairs, cleaning, gardening etc.)
- Delays in responding to enquiries and requests.

3.3. Storyy Homes operates an informal complaints procedure (stage 0) and a 3-stage formal procedure.

A complainant should be made aware that they may also make a complaint to a Regulatory Authority or Local Authority.

Who can make a complaint?

3.4. Storyy Homes understands that a person may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint directly.

We will accept feedback and complaints which come from:

- Young people who are supported by Storyy Homes staff or who live in a home where we are the landlord and / or support, care provider; this can also include former residents. This includes complaints raised anonymously.
- Those authorised to represent the young person's interests and where consent has been given such as family members, carers or agencies supporting the young person.
- MPs, Councillors, or other advocates making a complaint on behalf of a young person. This does not include contact from legal representatives of the young person.
- Organisations who receive a service directly from Storyy Homes.

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- People who feel directly adversely affected by a service we provide e.g., a direct neighbour.

What is not a complaint?

3.5. The following are not deemed complaints under the policy:

- A report of anti-social behaviour
- Raising a safeguarding concern
- Complaints made by Storyy Homes staff
- Complaints outside of Storyy Homes's remit. E.g., a complaint about the service of another organisation
- Appeals against warnings, notices to quit or evictions
- Complaints that become part of a legal process, for example a legal disrepair case reported through a solicitor
- Complaints arising from incidents more than 3 months old unless there is a pattern of concern, a potential breach of the Equalities Act or linked to regulated activity.

What are vexatious and persistent complaints?

3.6. We have adopted the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government Ombudsman's definitions of "unreasonable complainant behaviour" and "unreasonable persistent complaints."

3.7. We define unreasonably persistent and vexatious complaints as those that, because of the frequency or nature of a complainant's contact with Storyy Homes, hinder our consideration of their (or other people's) complaints.

What is feedback?

3.8. Storyy Homes defines feedback as information provided that lets us know when we have done something well; a compliment about our services or colleagues; a suggestion about how we could improve a service, procedure, or process; or constructive criticism that the complainant may not wish to formalise as a complaint.

4. Feedback and complaint standards

4.1. Storyy Homes will:

- Ensure that all young people have access to our "Feedback and Complaints" information that is clear and simple to understand
- Ensure young people are not negatively impacted by raising a complaint or providing feedback
- Support young people to bring complaints or provide feedback where required
- Listen and respond to all feedback and use it to improve our services
- Focus on resolving issues leading to complaints quickly
- Provide staff with the tools and knowledge to resolve complaints promptly and appropriately
- Use appropriate forms of redress when we have done something wrong and learn from our mistakes
- Reduce the impact of any identified unsafe or inappropriate care or treatment

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5. Informing Children about the complaint procedure

Upon referral and available throughout the homes children will have access to the complaint procedure in a child friendly format that they can understand. Within the Children's Guide given to each child before or upon admission this will be available and explained.

This includes the name, address, and telephone number of the Regulatory Authority in the area where the home is based. Other relevant organisation and persons details will also be included.

Registered Managers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that children and young people feel comfortable with the making of comments or complaints, they are enabled to make a complaint or representation and are free from reprisals if they choose to do so.

Complainants should be given any reasonable assistance they require or request, including being advised that they may ask someone else to make the complaint on their behalf.

They will also be given information and contacts details of Advocates they may contact, who may make complaints or advocate of their behalf or assist them in doing so.

The complainant must be advised that if they choose to complain directly to the Placing Authority, the Placing Authority must provide information and assistance.

The Children's Guide will provide advice to children and young people about how to use the procedures to their best advantage; and on the process of investigating complaints made by them.

The child's/ young person's parents and the Placing Authority must be given a copy of the complaint's procedure. This complaints procedure is available to all persons working in the Home.

If they request it or it appears appropriate, they should be given information on additional advocacy or support networks which may help them use the procedures effectively; this should include providing contact details.

6. Diversity and inclusion

6.1. Storyy Homes is committed to helping young people provide feedback or complain in a way that suits their individual needs. We provide a range of ways for feedback and complaints to be logged, provide information as part of welcome packs, during induction into the Storyy Homes accommodation and the children's guide.

6.2. Storyy Homes recognises some protected groups may be reluctant to raise a complaint or give feedback e.g., because of cultural considerations or the nature of the complaint itself. We provide support to those who need help to give feedback or raise a complaint and clear information on who to raise a complaint with if they feel their complaint will not be considered thoroughly if raising it directly with their service.

6.3. It is crucial that where young people lack the confidence or capacity to give feedback or make a complaint, they are offered appropriate support to do so.

6.4. It is essential that Storyy Homes staff understands whether young people are the subject of discrimination because of equalities' characteristic. If any person believes they have not been treated fairly should raise a complaint in line with this policy.

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7. Procedure

Making a complaint or providing feedback

7.1. Feedback can be made using any of the following channels (whichever is easiest for the young person):

- In person to any member of Storyy Homes staff.
- By phone or in writing to their service
- By e-mail to hello@storyy.group
- In writing to the Operations Manager, Storyy Homes, Suite 4, Oakmede Place, Terrace Road, Binfield, RG42 4JF.
- Using the Feedback and Complaints form available in all services, local suggestion boxes, local meetings, and forums
- Via an authorised advocate or external support person
- Anonymously by using our complaints form and withholding their name or by posting their concern to any of our offices and services

7.2. Storyy Homes does not accept or discuss complaints via social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook due the possibility of fake accounts being used.

Feedback

7.3. Any member of staff who receives positive verbal or written feedback from a young person or other party should acknowledge it and log it on the feedback and complaints form.

7.4. The Operations Manager should be notified of any feedback received about their services or staff, volunteers or involved young people, and ensure this is raised with the individual to highlight a job well done or areas where further development may be needed.

Putting things right

7.5. We encourage young people to contact us straight away if something has gone wrong and give us the opportunity to put it right. All staff are encouraged and expected to resolve problems for complainants where possible either directly or working in partnership with colleagues. Complainants should not be passed on or redirected to other colleagues to have their concerns resolved.

7.6. All initial contact should be recorded on our feedback and complaints system as an informal complaint to enable Storyy Homes to identify underlying causes or emerging trends in service failure or dissatisfaction.

7.7. If we cannot resolve the problem informally within an agreed timescale, or the issue is complex or significant, the contact should be recorded and investigated as a formal complaint.

Receiving a complaint

7.8. Where complaints are received from MPs, colleagues should be aware these are managed by the Operations Manager. The complaint should be initially directed to the Operations Manager as soon as possible on the same working day to ensure the correspondence can be acknowledged and responded to within 5 working days by the Operations Manager.

7.9. For all other complaints, all staff must take responsibility for acting when a complaint is received, whether this is received in writing by email, text, letter, or received a phone call, in person or via an advocate.

7.10. At each stage of the process colleagues should record all actions required and whether these have been completed on the complaints system.

7.11. All staff must notify the Team Leader or Home Manager if they receive a complaint in writing or verbally. The manager of the service will determine whether the complaint is informal or formal.

- Where the complaint is informal the manager will deal with the complaint, record the informal complaint and resolution on the complaints system along with any actions required within 2 days.
- If the complaint is formal the manager will log the complaint on the complaints system and acknowledge the complaint within 3 working days. The manager will then undertake the investigation.
- On occasions there may be reasons where it is not appropriate for the manager to investigate the complaint because of a conflict of interest – for example, if the complaint relates to the manager. Where this is the case, the manager should inform the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager will take the lead on investigating the complaint or assign the complaint to another manager as appropriate.

Investigating a formal complaint

7.12. All formal complaints at all stages should have an assigned investigation manager who is fully aware of the complaint procedure, processes, and timescales.

7.13. The investigating manager should have acknowledged the complaint in writing within 3 days of receipt and provided their details.

7.14. All acknowledgement letters must set out the complainant's rights to contact the appropriate regulator such as Ofsted or the Housing Ombudsman at any point during the complaints process.

7.15. There may occasions whereby the complaint points involves multiple departments. As such, the Operations Manager should assign a lead investigation manager for each point.

7.16. The lead investigation manager will work with other departments / colleagues to respond to the complaint and take responsibility for investigation, co-ordination, key point of contact for the complainant and final response.

7.17. Where the investigation manager feels that the complaint is complex and may require more than 10 working days to investigate, they should inform the complainant as soon as possible to inform them of an extension period required to conclude their findings.

Stage 1 - Formal complaints

7.18. The Investigating Manager should:

- Contact the complainant to ensure they fully understand the complaint and ascertain what resolution they are seeking, keeping written records of the points of complaint and desired resolution.
- Ensure they fully understand the nature of the service, department or function the complaint relates to.

- Ensure they have allocated enough time to investigate the complaint fully within the procedural timeframe, including allowing time to meet with the complainant, colleagues, or others as appropriate.
- Keep written records of meetings held as part of the investigation for future reference.
- Where meeting takes place with the complainant face to face or over the phone, provide them with a written copy of the notes made and confirm you have captured the complaint fully to minimise any issues where a complaint is not resolved because points have been missed.
- If an extension is required to complete the investigation, the Investigation Manager must seek approval from the Operations Manager. The complainant should be advised in writing of any delay and extension prior to the target response date being exhausted.
- Keep the complainant updated on extensions or delays.
- When the investigation has been completed the investigation manager should write a letter to the complainant explaining action taken and the outcome of the investigation within 13 days of the complaint receipt date. A complaint may be upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld at all (see section 8).

7.19. The Investigation Manager should consider the impact and potential risks to the complainant in the event the complaint is not upheld. They should consider the best way to communicate the outcomes of the complaint prior to formal written communication.

7.20. The Investigation Manager must ensure that the formal complaint response complies with the following:

- Each point raised in the complaint is covered in the outcome letter response
- The resolution the complainant sought
- Clearly sets out how the Investigation Manager arrived at the decisions
- Clearly sets out how the complaint will be resolved or why this is not possible
- The right of appeal and procedure
- The right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point during the complaints process

7.21. The Investigating Manager should share any actions required by a service / department with the relevant manager to ensure these are assigned and actioned locally and these should be logged and assigned on the complaints management system.

7.22. The Investigating Manager should record actions on the complaints management system and close the complaint where the complainant is satisfied with outcome.

7.23. Consider any compensation requests and record on the complaints management system.

7.24. Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complainant must contact the Investigating Manager within 15 days.

Stage 2 - Formal complaints

7.25. The Operations Manager should manage all stage 2 complaints.

7.26. The Operations Manager will review the reasons why the complainant is dissatisfied or whether a formal appeal has been requested. The Operations Manager will determine whether the complaint should be escalated to stage 2 of the complaint procedure or whether it should undertake a stage one complaints review. The focus should be to find a reasonable

resolution for the young person and the following factors should be considered when determining which path is appropriate:

Are there clear grounds of appeal such as new evidence, material omissions in the stage 1 investigation? If so, the complaint should move to stage 2.

Stage 2

7.27. The Operations Manager will:

- Acknowledge the complaint by letter within 3 days
- Assign a stage 2 Investigations Manager.

7.28. The Investigation Manager will:

- Contact the complainant to ensure they fully understand the complaint and ascertain what resolution they are seeking, keeping written records of the points of complaint and desired resolution.
- Review all the information collated as part of the Stage 1 investigation.
- Review the status of actions agreed at stage 1.
- Undertake the investigation into the complaint, meeting with the complainant, colleagues, or others as appropriate to fully investigate the complaint. They should keep written records of meetings held as part of the investigation for future reference.
- Where meeting takes place with the complainant face to face or over the phone, provide them with a written copy of the notes made and confirm you have captured the complaint fully to minimise any issues where a complaint is not resolved because points have been missed.
- Write a letter to the complainant explaining action taken and the outcome of the investigation within 18 days of complaint receipt date. The investigation manager has the right to uphold, partially or not uphold the original stage 1 outcome and make further recommendations (see section 8).

7.29. The Investigation Manager should consider the impact and potential risks to the complainant in the event the complaint is not upheld. They should consider the best way to communicate the outcomes of the complaint prior to formal written communication.

7.30. The formal response letter should:

- Ensure each point raised in the appeal is covered in the outcome letter response.
- The response clearly sets out how the Investigation Manager arrived at the decisions.
- The response clearly sets out how the complaint will be resolved or why this is not possible.
- The right to appeal and the procedure - all stage 2 appeals should be directed to the Operations Manager.
- The right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point during the complaints process.

7.31. The Investigating Manager should share any actions required by a department with the relevant manager to ensure these are assigned and actioned locally and these should be logged and assigned on the complaints management system.

7.32. The Investigating Manager should record actions on the complaints management system and close the complaint where the complainant is satisfied with outcome.

7.33. Consider any compensation requests and record on the complaints management system.

7.34. Where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome the complainant must contact Storyy Homes within 15 days of the date of the outcome letter.

7.35. All appeals should be addressed to the Senior Complaints and Feedback Officer

Stage 3 – Complaints Panel

7.36. The Operations Manager will facilitate the final stage of the internal formal complaints process.

7.37. The Operations Manager will:

- Log the stage 3 complaint on the complaints management system and acknowledge receipt within 2 working days.
- Consult with the relevant director, complainant, and other panel representatives to convene a mutually convenient date for the panel hearing.
- Send a letter to the complainant outlining the panel hearing arrangements within 7 working days of receipt of the stage 3 appeal.
- Provide the chair of the panel a full written briefing in advance of the panel.
- Ensures the panel hearing date is convened within 20 days of move to stage 3.
- Circulate papers 5 days before the panel meeting.

7.38. The stage 3 panel will be chaired by a director and will ensure all panel members understand the process. They will support the representatives of the complaints panel in responding to the complainant's complaint.

7.39. The panel should comprise of a director, young person (maximum of 2) and an independent professional or independent manager.

7.40. The investigating stage 2 manager will be required to attend the panel in part to present the findings. They will not form part of the decision-making panel.

7.41. The complainant:

- Has the right to attend and address the panel.
- The right to be accompanied by a friend advocate or support circle. Legal representation will not be permitted to attend.
- Right not to attend – they must be informed that the panel will be convened in their absence.
- To submit a written statement.

7.42. The panel will:

- Consider the complaint and listen to any further feedback from the complainant, investigation manager and review all documentation in connection with the complaint at all stages.
- Work to reach a resolution that is satisfactory to the complainant.

- Will meet to agree the outcome of the panel hearing once the complainant has had opportunity to provide any further evidence in connection with their complaint.

- Make recommendations to the organisation such as lessons learnt, policy change requirements.

7.43. The chair will:

- Write a letter to the complainant explaining the outcome of the panel hearing and any recommendations within 5 days of the panel hearing and the external appeals procedure and contact details.
- Feedback any actions in respect of the complaint to the relevant manager of the service or department concerned.
- Ensure any organisational learning is followed up.
- Consider compensation requests and record on the complaints management system.
- Record all outcomes and actions on the complaints management system.
- If no response is received from the complainant within 15 days record the complaint closed on the complaints management system.

8. Complaint decisions and redress

8.1. We expect most complaints to be resolved informally at stage 0 or stage 1 of the formal process.

8.2. Formal complaints may be completely or partially upheld or not upheld. Outlined below are descriptions the Investigating Manager may use to determine the outcome of a complaint.

Decision Description

Upheld The complainant was fully justified in making their complaint. Our response should acknowledge this in any of the following methods of redress:

- Say sorry to the complainant
- Provide, review, or change service to the complainant
- Provide an explanation or answer to the complainant
- Review a policy or procedure
- Take action or enforce a decision
- Arrange training or guidance for staff
- Employee action (such as changing support worker)
- Provide a compensation or goodwill payment
- Offer mediation

Partially Upheld Some, but not all of the complaint was justified. This can sometimes happen where the person has made a complaint covering multiple issues. Where the complaint is justified, the above steps apply.

Not Upheld The complaint was not justified. This might occur where it is found following investigation that the complaint is groundless.

8.3. The Investigation Manager should consider the impact and potential risks to the complainant in the event the complaint is not upheld. They should consider the best way to communicate the outcomes of the complaint prior to formal written communication.

8.4. In any event it is best practice to advise the complainant of the outcome of their complaint and actions to redress prior to a formal response. This enables the complainant to identify any omission, misunderstanding of their complaint, or obtain clear understanding of the reasons their complaint is not being upheld before a formal and final decision is made.

8.5. Where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld and in some cases even where it has not there

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may be a number up follow up actions or redress which are important factors in resolving the complaint. The Investigation Manager will be responsible for agreeing these with the relevant manager who is in turn responsible for ensuring the actions are followed through and that any progress is communicated to the complainant outside of the complaints process.

8.6. Some resolutions will require commitment for longer term actions such as a new kitchen or bathroom or phased responsive repairs or pest control measures. In these circumstances the works may not have been completed. In these circumstances the Investigating Manager should clearly set out and confirm the actions planned or underway and timescales as part of the resolution.

8.7. There should be an assigned lead responsible for monitoring of ongoing actions and resolutions. They will communication with the complainant where delays or issues arise.

8.8. Investigation Managers should refer to the compensation policy for details on Storyy Homes's approach to redress and compensation.

8.9. If a complainant is still unhappy at the exhaustion of our complaints process, their case should be referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service. The stage 3 outcome letter should clearly set this out along with the Ombudsman's contact details.

9. Persistent or vexatious complaints

9.1. Storyy Homes is committed to investigating and responding to all complaints fairly, comprehensively, and in a timely manner. However, there are a minority of cases where a person complains in a way that prevents colleagues from investigating the complaint; takes up a disproportionate level of resources; or behaves in a way that is unacceptable

9.2. Storyy Homes will not assume a new complaint from a complainant who has made unreasonable or vexatious complaints in the past is unreasonable. Storyy Homes will consider each complaint raised on its own merits. All relevant correspondence will be evaluated to consider the circumstances, including:

- Whether a complainant has made persistent or unreasonable demands.
- Whether there is a strong likelihood that complaints are being made to intentionally cause harassment, divert resources or to disrupt Storyy Homes services.
- Whether the complainant or their representative has been abusive or threatening to staff or has produced excessive correspondence.
- Whether the complainant displays vexatious behaviour.

9.3. Storyy Homes will treat as abusive, any behaviour that seeks to harass, verbally abuse, or otherwise intimidate our colleagues. This can include the use of foul or inappropriate language or the use of offensive language.

9.4. Abusive behaviour may be demonstrated through:

- Using threatening, offensive, or foul language on the telephone
- Using threatening, offensive, or foul language face to face
- Sending multiple threatening or offensive emails or text messages
- Leaving multiple threatening or offensive voicemails
- The use of offensive or threatening posts on social media

Dealing with abusive behaviour

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9.5. Storyy Homes accepts that people under stress or who are feeling angry or upset may react in an abusive or aggressive way to the person with whom they are dealing. However, a balance must be drawn between the ability and desire to assist a complainant, and what can be achieved in the circumstances.

Over the telephone

9.6. In situations where the language and content of telephone calls becomes abusive or threatening to colleagues, it is acceptable for a Storyy Homes colleague to terminate the call. In all cases the colleague should remain polite and, wherever possible:

- Provide the complainant with the opportunity to modify their behaviour, by informing the complainant that unless they do so, the call will be terminated.
- If a call needs to be terminated due to the complainant's conduct a record must be included in the complaints management system.

Face to face

9.7. The personal safety of Storyy Homes staff is of paramount importance and if during face-to-face meetings the complainant's behaviour becomes aggressive, abusive or displays high levels of distress, the meeting should be ended as quickly as possible.

9.8. The decision to end a meeting should (if possible) be explained clearly and politely, so that the complainant does not feel that they are being dismissed or their complaint ignored. Unless it is clearly inappropriate to do so, they should also be informed that it may be possible to continue the conversation at a future meeting when they are less distressed.

9.9. Where a meeting is terminated because of the conduct of the complainant a record of the incident must be made on the complaints management system.

In correspondence

9.10. Staff in receipt of abusive or threatening correspondence need not reply to this other than to acknowledge its receipt. The relevant manager will review the case and may decide to respond to the complainant explaining that the tone of their correspondence is unacceptable and that no further correspondence will be entered into unless the complainant amends their tone.

9.11. Where a threat of harm to the colleague is made, this should be reported to the Operations Manager and logged on the complaints management system as an incident and actions should be taken to protect the colleague.

- A manager will contact the complainant either by phone, in writing or by email to explain to the complainant why their behaviour is causing concern and ask them to modify their behaviour.
- The manager will explain the actions that Storyy Homes may take if the behaviour does not change.
- If the disruptive behaviour continues, a more senior manager will write to the complainant advising them that the way in which they will be allowed to contact us in future may be restricted.
- Any restriction that is imposed on the complainant's contact with us will be appropriate and proportionate and the complainant will be advised of the period of time the restriction will be in place for. In most cases restrictions will relate to the individual complainant. For example, we would need to continue contact with a complainant, but we may limit the contact to an

identified member of staff only, or to certain days of the week. In such cases the restrictions would need to be regularly reviewed.

When there is a serious incident

9.12. This procedure is specifically aimed at dealing with complaints that have become vexatious. However, in extreme cases where there are direct and credible threats or incidents of violence, this will be referred immediately to the police.

Imposing restrictions

9.13. Storyy Homes encourages young people to approach us with questions about service delivery and to challenge any service that they feel has failed. In all cases where a young person feels the service, they have received has fallen short of the high standards we set for our organisation their complaint will be investigated.

9.16. If a complainant is persistently abusive when they contact our colleagues or persistently call to discuss a complaint or make further complaints and this is proving time consuming and disruptive, the following steps will be taken to deal with this:

9.17. Restrictions will be tailored to deal with the individual circumstances of the complainant and may include:

- Refusing to take further contact by telephone except through a third party e.g., solicitor/councillor/friend acting on their behalf.
- Refusing to accept emails from the complainant insisting instead that they correspond by letter.
- Banning the complainant from accessing any of our offices except by appointment.
- Requiring contact to take place with one named colleague only.
- Restricting telephone calls to specified days / times / duration.
- Requiring any personal contact to take place in the presence of an appropriate witness.
- Letting the complainant know that we will not reply to or acknowledge any further contact from them on the specific topic of that complaint (in this case, a designated colleague should be identified who will read future correspondence).

Informing complainants of the decision to treat their complaint as vexatious.

9.18. When the decision has been taken to apply restrictions to a complainant, the Operations Manager will contact the complainant in writing (and/or as appropriate) to explain:

- Why we have taken the decision.
- What action we are taking and the duration of that action.
- The right of the complainant to contact the Housing Ombudsman or Local Government Ombudsman about the fact that they have been treated as an unreasonable, persistent, or vexatious complainant.

9.19. Where a complainant continues to behave in a way which is unacceptable, the Operations Manager may decide to refuse all contact with the complainant and stop any investigation into his or her complaint.

9.20. Where the behaviour is so extreme or it threatens the immediate safety and welfare of colleagues, we will consider other options, for example reporting the matter to the police or

taking legal action. In such cases, we may not give the complainant prior warning of that action.

9.21. New complaints from people who have been identified as abusive, unreasonable, or persistent under this policy will be treated separately and will be dealt with in line with the Storyy Homes complaints policy. We do not support a “blanket policy” of ignoring genuine service requests or complaints where they are well founded and will review each complaint.

Review arrangements

9.22. The status of a complainant judged to be unreasonably persistent or abusive will be reviewed by the Operations Manager after 1 month.

9.23. The complainant will be informed of the result of this review if the decision to apply this procedure has been changed or extended.

Referring unreasonable or persistent complainants to the Housing or Local Government Ombudsman

9.24. We will always try to work through a complaint, however, on rare occasions, there may be no resolution to a complaint raised by unreasonably persistent complainants and relationships may break down completely and we may not achieve a satisfactory outcome. In such circumstances we will direct the complainant to the Housing Ombudsman for review.

Record keeping

9.25. The Operations Manager will keep all the details of the case and the action that has been taken in respect of unreasonable, persistent, or vexatious complaints.

- Complaints and feedback are welcomed and encouraged, and we will manage complaints in an open, accountable, and respectful way. We believe that all feedback helps Storyy Homes improve the quality of the services we deliver to our young people.
- Storyy Homes will apologise when our services have fallen below our organisational standards and expectations and will use appropriate forms of redress when we have done something wrong to put things right. Where appropriate this will include consideration of compensation.
- Storyy Homes will equip staff with tools and knowledge to manage complaints effectively and resolve complaints promptly and appropriately. Colleagues will receive training on how to deal with complaints.
- All formal complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days
- Stage 1 complaints will be investigated, and a written outcome provided within 13 working days of receipt of the complaint
- Stage 2 complaints will be investigated, and a written outcome provided within 18 working days of receipt of the complaint
- Stage 3 complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days
- Stage 3 complaint panels will be organised within 7 working days of receipt of the complaint
- Stage 3 complaint panels will be convened within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint
- The outcome of stage 3 complaints will be communicated in writing within 5 working days of the panel meeting
- We will promote our complaints and feedback policy to all young people in their “Welcome Packs;” during tenancy sign up; during key working sessions and appointments; newsletter

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and website.

- We will keep in touch with complainants throughout the complaints process
- Sometimes it may take longer to finalise an investigation – for example due to the complexity or the availability of key individuals who we need to speak to as part of the investigation. In these circumstances we will communicate any delays or investigation extensions and revised timescales.
- We will record all complaints, whether informal or formal on our complaints management system.
- We will ensure that complainants are aware that they have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of their complaint
- We recognise that making a complaint can be a sensitive matter and will wherever possible protect the confidentiality of the person making the complaint where requested
- Where anonymous complaints are received these will be still be logged and recorded. We will work with the anonymous complainant and record on our complaints management system how they would like to be updated. All steps in managing the complaint will be follows, however staff managing the complaint may not be able to communicate or provide the anonymous complaint with a response.

Appendix 1 - Storyy Homes Complaints Standards

Values

Timescales

Communication

Rights

- Storyy Homes will ensure systems and information are in place to ensure young people know how to provide feedback, complaints channels are clear, simple, and easy to access and there are multiple ways for young people to complain
- We will make information on how to make complaints available in easy read and other accessible formats and languages where required
- Storyy Homes understands that complainants may be upset about an issue they raise about their experiences or on behalf of others. We will always endeavour to accommodate ways of resolving complaints in partnership with the complainant / or their advocate.
- Storyy Homes will not tolerate abuse of colleagues or excessive demands on resources. We will operate a clear framework for handling vexatious or persistent complaints that does not dilute the young person's right to complain.
- Where a complaint requests another person act on their behalf we will always review and or request the complaints written consent before progressing the complaint. Where we do not have consent or where we are waiting for consent, we will direct all communication directly to the complainant unless it would be detrimental to do so
- Feedback will help us improve our complaints managing and outcomes. Storyy Homes will routinely monitor and assess the quality of individual complaints managing through quarterly quality audit assessments.
- The Operations Manager will ensure Storyy Homes has the organisational structures and management systems in place to report on and review the management of complaints, to

'We're creating a world where every young person has a brighter future'

ensure complaints are managed effectively and learning is shared and integrated into organisational policies, procedures, practice and colleague learning and development.

- The Operations Manager will analyse and review complaint handling, trends, issue and action plans on a regular basis and report back to the young people at least once a year and through our newsletter.

Inclusion

Consent

Quality & Continuous Improvement

1. Log on the complaints management system – no acknowledgement letter required.
2. Contact complainant, find out what resolution they are seeking.
3. Review matter and work to resolve within 2 working days.
4. Write a letter/ email to the complainant explaining action taken and outcome within 2 days.
5. Where informal complaint is resolved, record actions on complaints management system and close.
6. Any actions to be taken to be assigned locally and recorded on the system.
7. Complainant must contact within 15 days if not satisfied with actions/ resolution - record actions on system and move to formal stage 1 complaints process.
8. Log stage 1 complaint on the complaints management system.
9. Acknowledge complaint by letter within 3 days.
10. Investigating Manager to contact complainant, find out what resolution they are seeking.
11. Undertake investigation into complaint, keeping written records of any meetings with the complainant, colleagues or others interviewed as part of the investigation for future reference.
12. Where meeting takes place with complainant face to face or over the phone, provide them with a written copy of the notes made and confirm accuracy.
13. Write a letter to the complainant explaining action taken and outcome of investigation within 13 days of complaint receipt.
14. If extension required to complete investigation, seek approval from the Operations manager and write outcome letter to the complainant within 18 days of complaint.
15. Any actions to be taken to be assigned locally or otherwise and recorded on the system.
16. Record actions on complaints management system and close where the complainant is satisfied with outcome.
17. Consider compensation request or requirement and record on complaints management system.
18. Where complainant dissatisfied with outcome, the complainant must contact within 15 days, complaint goes to the Operations Manager to assign to the Investigating Manager and record as stage 2 complaint in the complaints management system.
19. The Operations Manager acknowledges the stage 2 complaint within 3 working days and assigns an Investigating Manager.
20. Investigating Manager acknowledges the complaint by letter within 3 days.

21. Investigating Manager reviews notes, and actions recorded on complaints management system relating to Stage 1.

Appendix 2 - Complaint Stages and Management Checklist

Informal Complaint - Stage 0

Formal Complaint - Stage 1

Formal Complaint - Stage 2

22. Investigating Manager to contact complainant. Identify what resolution the complainant is seeking.

23. Undertake investigation into complaint, keeping written records of any meetings with the complainant, colleagues or others interviewed as part of the investigation for future reference.

24. Where meeting takes place with complainant face to face or over the phone, provide them with a written copy of the notes made and confirm accuracy.

25. Write a letter to the complainant explaining action taken and outcome of investigation within 18 days of complaint.

26. If extension required to complete investigation, seek approval from the Operations Manager and write outcome letter to the complainant within 23 days of complaint.

27. Any actions to be taken forward to be assigned as appropriate and recorded the system.

28. Record actions on the complaints management system and close where complainant satisfied with outcome.

29. Consider compensation request or requirement and record on complaints management system.

30. Where complainant is dissatisfied with outcome, the complainant must contact within 15 days, the complaint goes to the Operations Manager to assign an Investigating Manager and record as stage 3 complaint on the complaints management system.

31. The Operations Manager acknowledges the complaint within 3 working days.

32. The Operations Manager is to contact complainant to arrange appropriate date mutually convenient for all parties and appoints a chairperson and panel within 7 working days of the stage 3 complaint.

33. The panel hearing is to be convened within 20 days of move to Stage 3.

34. Papers for the panel are prepared and sent to panel Members 7 days before Panel meeting.

35. Panel meets to address the complainant's complaint and seeks to reach a resolution with the complainant.

36. Any actions to be taken forward to be assigned as appropriate and recorded on the complaints management system.

37. The Chairperson writes a letter to the complainant explaining the outcome of the panel hearing within 5 days of panel.

38. The Chairperson records actions on the complaints management system and close where complainant satisfied with outcome.

39. Consider compensation request or requirement and record on complaints management system.

40. If no response received within 15 days record complaint closed on the complaints management system.

41. If complainant still dissatisfied, move to external complaints process

Formal Complaint - Stage 3 Panel Meeting

External Complaint - Housing / Local Government Ombudsman

The Operations Manager will compile all papers in connection with the request received from Housing/ Ombudsman.

Comprehensive records of the investigation including any reports, letters and correspondence with the complainant will need to be made available to the Ombudsman and held on the complaints management system.