

STEPPING STONE PROJECTS
COMPLAINTS and COMPLIMENTS POLICY AND
PROCEDURE

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

Stepping Stone Projects is committed to providing a high quality housing and support service that is fair and accessible. This procedure is for all Customers, applicants, referring agents, tenants, neighbours, advocates and any other agencies that receive a service, apply for a service or are referring someone to our services. It is designed to enable complaints to be made easily and for them to be dealt with in an open and thorough manner. A separate Appeals Policy and Procedure is in place for decisions that have been taken by Stepping Stone Projects with regard to referrals, initial and ongoing needs and risk assessments, withdrawal of support or bringing a tenancy or occupancy agreement to an end.

In our commitment to continuously improving the services we provide we actively welcome complaints and compliments as a way of receiving feedback and responding to any concerns and improving the service we provide to our customers.

All compliments and complaints and their outcomes are confidential, are recorded centrally and monitored by the Senior Management and reported regularly to the Board of Trustees.

This policy and procedure will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness, to consider any disincentives to Customers, applicants or stakeholders to making a complaint and to help us to monitor and improve the quality and effectiveness of our services

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

All Customers will be advised about the complaints policy and procedure and also their individual rights and responsibilities as a recipient of our services. The complaints procedure is included in the Customers Handbook which details how a Customer can make a complaint and how the process will be managed.

We acknowledge that there are two types of complaints which a Customer may raise: informal and formal.

Informal complaints relate to queries, problems or concerns that Customers may have with regard to their accommodation or support service, which the Customer may wish to initially raise informally. In these situations, the Customer should speak in the first instance with their Support Worker who will deal with the matter within 5 working days, and provide feedback to the Customer verbally.

Formal complaints are those of a more serious or enduring nature, including those that may have already been reported informally, for which, a formal complaints procedure is in place.

At all stages of the procedure Customers are allowed to bring a friend or advisor to speak on their behalf and provide general support. There are a number of agencies who are able to provide this type of support: CAB, Welfare Rights, Mind and other advocacy services.

Within our services there are two types of provision which a complaint can be raised in relation to; one which relates to the housing management service and the other which relates to the support service.

Housing Management Complaints

In projects where Stepping Stone Projects is acting as the landlord, Customers, advocates, neighbours or stakeholders can use this procedure to complain if they are not satisfied with the condition of the accommodation, repairs or communal areas, or if they are experiencing anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance problems.

If the complaint relates to the furnishings, fittings, decoration or communal areas it will be dealt with by the Housing Support Worker for that property.

If the complaint relates to the repairs service or other aspects of the tenancy agreement for which the main landlord has responsibility the Housing Support Worker will support the Customer in making a complaint to the Landlord.

If the complaint relates to neighbour nuisance issues or anti-social behaviour, the Housing Support Worker will deal with this complaint by investigating thoroughly, and taking the appropriate action to alleviate the situation.

Support Service Complaints

These complaints will be investigated by the Line Manager.

This procedure can be used by Customers in situations where a Customer feels they have been treated unfairly for any reason or treated in an unprofessional manner. This procedure can also be used if a Customer feels that they have not received sufficient levels of support, frequency of visits or the support has ended too soon.

Referring Agents or any other stakeholders who feel their Customers have been treated unfairly or in an inappropriate manner by a member of staff can also use this procedure. The procedure can also be used by anyone who has any concerns about the manner in which they have been spoken to or with the outcome of any contact with the service, other

than decisions taken with regard to referrals, initial needs and risk assessments which should be raised through our separate Appeals Policy and Procedure.

If, once the procedure has been exhausted, the complainant is unhappy with the manner in which a complaint has been managed they can also contact the local Supporting People or Adult Care Team who would be able to investigate this on the claimant's behalf.

Timescales

Once a formal complaint has been received, a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within two working days advising who will be dealing with the complaint and that they will complete their investigation and report the outcome to the complainant within 10 working days.

The investigating officer will investigate the complaint thoroughly and, if necessary, will meet with or contact the complainant for further information to reach a decision regarding the outcome of the complaint and any action that may be needed to remedy it.

Details of the investigation and outcome will be communicated to the complainant within 10 working days, both verbally where possible, and in writing.

The details of the complaint and the actions taken to investigate will be recorded internally by the investigating officer, and reported internally to the Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation then they can, within 10 working days of the date recorded on the letter, complain directly to the Operations Manager or Head of Resources or Director of Operations who will review the complaint and actions taken. If necessary, a meeting to discuss the complaint with the complainant will be arranged as part of the review. The result of the review will be communicated to the complainant in writing, and where appropriate verbally, within 10 working days.

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, the complainant will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer who will view all of the investigative information and details of the actions taken in response to the complaint. A meeting will be arranged with the complainant as part of this process within 10 working days to allow the complainant to present their case personally. A final decision will be reached following this meeting and the complainant will be advised in writing of the outcome and any further action which will be taken.

The decision of the Chief Executive Officer is final and there is no further stage of appeal.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE

A copy of the Complaints/Compliments Form is supplied to all Customers at the start of their support service. Customers, Referring Agents or Stakeholders can make a compliment at any time either verbally, in writing, by email or by completing the form.

As an organisation we welcome positive feedback and compliments because they inform us of the things we are doing right and this again feeds into our commitment to continuous improvement.

All compliments are recorded centrally and discussed in the Senior Management Team and at the Board of Trustee meetings.

Appendix 1

Making a Complaint

How do I make a complaint and what is the procedure?

Initially a query, problem or concern should be raised informally with your Support Worker, or if they are not available another member of staff who may be on duty if you are a resident in one of our accommodation-based service. This may take the form of a direct meeting, telephone call, email or letter.

If the initial informal query or concern is not dealt with to your satisfaction a formal procedure is in place as set out below. Formal complaints can be made either verbally or in writing. The officer receiving the complaint will record the nature and details of the complaint, and provide a written acknowledgement to the complainant.

If I am not satisfied with the initial process

If you are not satisfied then you should complain to the Line Manager who will review the complaint, investigation and decision. If the original complaint was dealt with by the Line Manager, you should complain to the Head of Resources or Director of Operations. Your complaint will then be investigated and you will receive written notification of the decision within 10 working days.

What if I am still unhappy?

You should complain to the Chief Executive Officer. The Senior Management Team will advise you how to do this. A meeting will then be arranged within 10 working days where you will be able to present your case personally.

Am I allowed to bring a friend?

At all stages of the procedure you are allowed to bring a friend or advisor to speak on your behalf and support you.

How is the information recorded?

At all stages of the procedure the details of the complaint will be recorded and both you and the investigating officer will sign the record form to confirm that this is a true record of the investigation.

Appendix 2

Complaints/Compliments Form

Name: Date:

Address: Contact Number:

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Email Address:

Support Service

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Nature of the complaint/compliment:

[illegible]

[illegible]

Appendix 3

Complaint Investigation and Outcome Form **(Internal use only)**

Date	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken/By Whom	Outcome	Further Action

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Manager's signature:

Date:

SUPPORT SERVICE COMPLAINTS

RAISE COMPLAINT EITHER VERBALLY OR IN WRITING TO THE LINE MANAGER



COMPLAINT ACKNOWLEDGED AND LOGGED



LINE MANAGER WILL INVESTIGATE COMPLAINT AND INTERVIEW THOSE INVOLVED



ADVISE OF DECISION WITHIN TEN WORKING DAYS



IF UNHAPPY WITH THE DECISION:
APPEAL IN WRITING TO OPERATIONS MANAGER WITHIN
TEN WORKING DAYS OF DATE OF ORIGINAL DECISION



ONCE INVESTIGATED AND DECISION REVIEWED:
DECISION PROVIDED IN WRITING WITHIN TEN WORKING
DAYS.



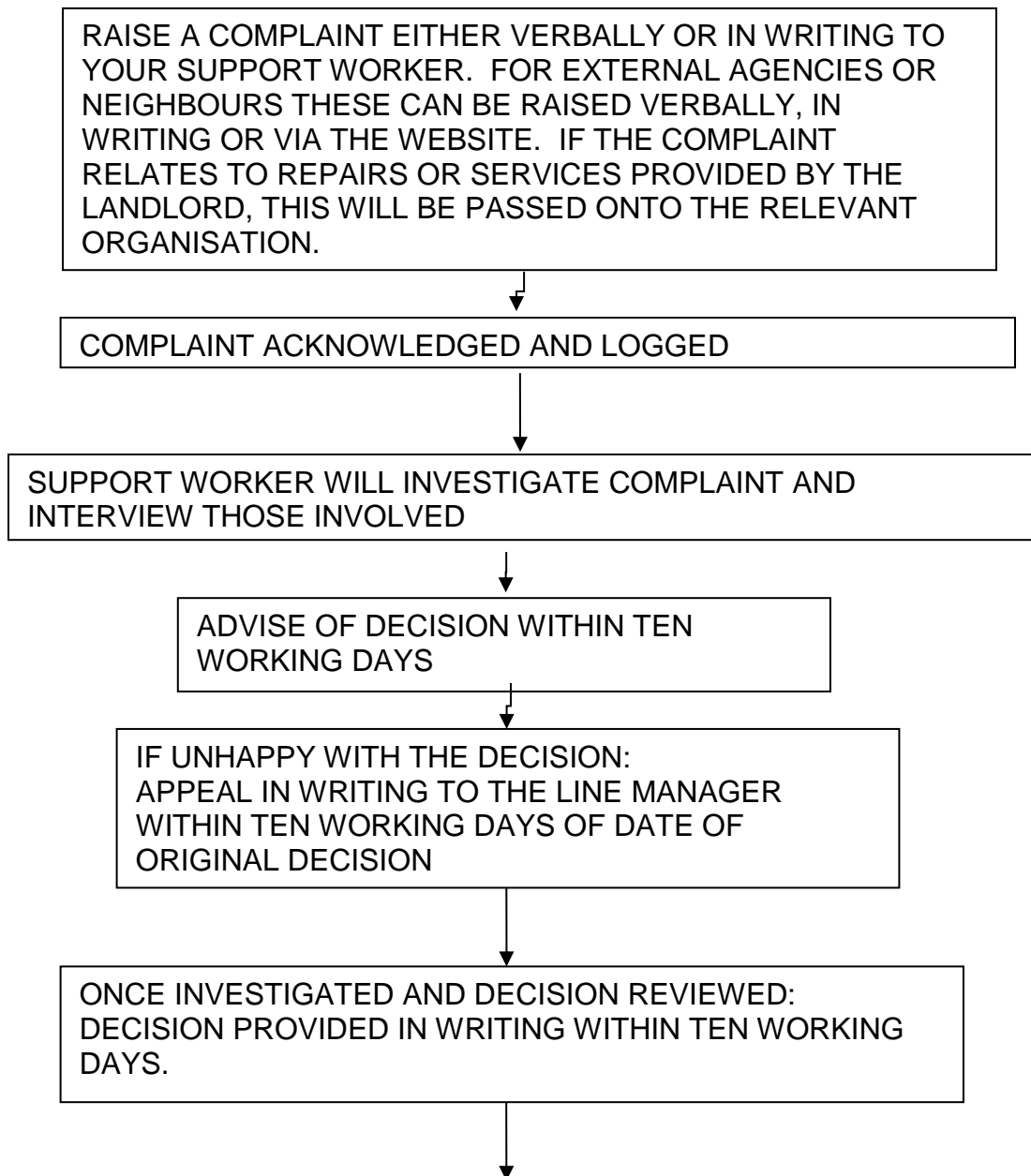
IF UNHAPPY WITH REVIEWED DECISION:
APPEAL IN WRITING TO DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS WITHIN TEN
WORKING DAYS.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE WILL ADVISE OF FINAL DECISION, IN WRITING, WITHIN TEN WORKING DAYS.



IF UNHAPPY WITH THE WAY THE COMPLAINT HAS BEEN HANDLED, YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SUPPORTING PEOPLE TEAM OR ADULT CARE TO REVIEW ON YOUR BEHALF

HOUSING MANAGEMENT COMPLAINTS FLOWCHART

IF UNHAPPY WITH REVIEWED DECISION:
APPEAL IN WRITING TO THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
WITHIN TEN WORKING DAY.



DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS WILL ADVISE OF FINAL
DECISION, IN WRITING, WITHIN TEN WORKING DAYS.



IF UNHAPPY WITH THE WAY THE COMPLAINT HAS BEEN
HANDLED, YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SUPPORTING
PEOPLE TEAM OR ADULT CARE TO REVIEW ON YOUR
BEHALF