



Executive Summary

The Group consists of Staying Put which is the parent body and Solace Housing Association ("Solace") which is its subsidiary. Solace Housing Association has adopted a large proportion of the Staying Put Group policies and procedures with the aim of ensuring it is compliant with the regulatory standards. Where existing Group controls are felt to be noncompliant with RSH requirements, the subsidiary has created its own policies, which will supersede those of the Group. In such cases the Group will aim in future to apply Solace HA's policies across the Group to ensure that the highest standards are maintained.

Policies and procedures are in the process of being reviewed, with a number of new policies being created specifically for Solace HA. For those areas where Solace HA will aim to follow the Group structure, it is imperative that the Group ensures these are of the standards required for RPs.

PART ONE – POLICY STATEMENT

Staying Put is committed to providing high quality services to those with whom we work. We acknowledge that there may be occasions when people are not happy with some aspect of our provision, and we welcome feedback from our service users. Such feedback is invaluable in helping us to evaluate and improve our work.

We take seriously any concern or complaint and will investigate it promptly, for resolution as quickly as possible. Throughout the complaints process, it is our aim to treat individuals with respect, consideration and confidentiality.

It is not our practice to deal with complaints from a person when a client has alleged domestic or sexual abuse against them; this is to ensure we do not breach confidentiality and data protection.

We will keep a record of all complaints, which will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team, the Governance, People and Services subgroup and the Board of Trustees. The complaints procedure will form part of our process of monitoring the quality, effectiveness and non-discriminatory nature of our services.

We reserve the right not to investigate a complaint if this is made by someone who is alleged to be a perpetrator of abuse or violence.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

- Ensure everyone knows how to make a complaint and understands how the complaint will be processed
- Provide individuals with a fair and effective way to complain about our work and services

- Ensure that complaints are dealt with consistently, fairly and sensitively within a clear time frame
- Ensure that complaints are monitored to improve our services
- Record, store and manage all complaints accurately and in accordance with the Data Protection Act

Data Protection

To process a complaint Staying Put will hold personal data about the complainant, which the individual provides, and which other people give in response to the complaint. We will hold this data securely and only use it to address the complaint. The identity of the person making the complaint will only be known to those who need to consider the complaint and will not be revealed to other people or made public. However, in some circumstances it may not be possible to preserve confidentiality, for example, where relevant legislation applied, or allegations are made which involve the conduct of third parties.

Complaints files will be destroyed in a secure manner six years after the complaint has been closed.

PART TWO – PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE

Informal complaints

Raising an informal concern, at an early stage, will hopefully reduce the likelihood of it developing into a formal complaint.

To raise an informal complaint, you should make your concern known to a member of staff, or manager as soon as possible, either in person or over the phone. We aim to listen to what you have to say, to apologise whenever necessary, and to try to agree a solution with you. We will try to deal with your complaint to your satisfaction immediately. However, there will be occasions when this may not be possible (for example during holiday periods or staff sickness). If there is to be a delay in responding to your complaint you will be informed.

If you are not happy with our response, you should then use the formal procedure outlined below.

All informal complaints are to be logged on the 'complaints' tracker on Sharepoint that sits within the Operational Management site under 'Complaints'. This should be recorded by the manager/team leader receiving the complaint and should be updated at each point of contact with the complainant until a resolution is agreed.

Formal complaints

You may use the formal complaints procedure at any time: you do not have to complain informally first if you believe that your complaint is too serious for that approach.

Your formal complaint must be made in writing. Attached to this Policy you will find a form (Appendix 1), which you may use to make your complaint. Alternatively, you can write to us

by email to complaints@stayingput.org.uk or by post marking the envelope clearly as “Private & Confidential”, for the attention of the Executive Assistant. If your complaint involves the Executive Assistant, you should address it to the CEO and if the complaint is concerning the CEO, you should address it for the attention of the Chair of the Board.

When a complaint comes into the organisation, the Executive Assistant will record the detail onto the ‘complaints’ tracker on SharePoint.

The Executive Assistant will acknowledge receipt of the formal complaint in writing within 5 working days. The complaint will be passed to the appropriate manager in accordance with the complaints policy, or the Executive Assistant may ask the complainant for further information, for example if the person has not disclosed who, or which service area the complaint is about. The Executive Assistant will also send out as an attachment the form for a formal complaint (Appendix 1).

Where appropriate to do so i.e. where the complaint is not staff specific the Executive Assistant will create a folder on SharePoint to upload all communication/correspondence related to the complaint. The folder will be labelled with the reporting quarter and the line number on the tracker i.e. Q101. The folder will contain a running contact record sheet and managers are to add to this every time there is communication with the complainant, or an action related to the investigation of the complaint.

Following the investigation, the complainant will receive a full written response, usually within 15 working days of our acknowledgment letter. Occasionally investigations may take longer, particularly for complex complaints. Should this be the case you will be notified in writing with an updated timeframe.

Should the complainant still be dissatisfied once Staying Put have been concluded their investigation they could approach one of the following agencies for advice;

- A solicitor
- Citizens Advice
- Ombudsman

Anonymous Complaints

Any complaints received anonymously will be recorded and considered, but action may be limited if further information is required to ensure a full and fair investigation.

Complaints monitoring

The Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Lead will carry out monthly audits of all complaints to ensure that they are dealt with in accordance with the aims and principles of this policy, as well as to monitor the status and progress of the complaint.

The Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Lead will provide a report to the Governance, People and Services Subgroup committee.

Appendix 1

Staying Put – Formal Complaints Form

To proceed with a complaint please complete this form and return to the Executive Assistant at Staying Put either by post, or via email: complaints@stayingput.org.uk. This form will enable the complaint to be dealt with appropriately.

Your name:

Your contact telephone number:

Your e-mail address:

Your Address:

Postcode:

Please give details of any special needs we need to bear in mind when we are dealing with your complaint and communicating with you.

Date & Time Incident Occurred:

Please give details of your complaint, stating names of staff wherever possible. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

If you have already verbally spoken to the staff member regarding your complaint please give the name of staff and what was the outcome:

What do you think should be done to put things right?

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Please note that in investigating your complaint Staying Put may be required to provide any named persons with details of the complaint to give them a fair opportunity to respond.

Your signature:

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Date:

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For Office Use

Date received:

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Date acknowledgement sent:

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**Date outcome of investigation
communicated to complainant:**

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Outcome of the complaint:

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CEO's signature:

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Date:

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Amendment Log

Date of revision	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
January 2021	Annual Review	Staff and Board	Full policy revision
September 2018	Annual Review	Non	No consultation as no amendments required
September 2017	Annual Review	Staff and board	Statement amended and final sentence in first paragraph added.
September 2016	Annual Review	Staff and board	Minor typos corrected
June 2015	Annual review	Staff and board	Statement included and service manager as first point of complaint instead of Director
August 2014	Annual review	Staff and Board members	No changes
March 2022	Annual leave	HR	Update of job titles, no changes
May 2022	Update	HR	Email address updated
March 2024	Update	Head of Ops & CC	Update to new template, minor wording changes, clarify procedure

Date Agreed by Board	
Date reviewed	
Next review	