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## Introduction

This two stage complaints procedure is to be used where attempts to deal with issues informally have failed, or where informal resolution is not appropriate.

While this procedure must be followed for all formal complaints, staff are able to take into account the complainant's personal circumstances and use their discretion where relevant.

There are a number of letter and form templates you will need throughout the procedure, as follows:

Client Feedback Form

Complaints Leaflet & Easy read version

Complaint monitoring form 1

Complaint monitoring form 2

Complaint activity & actions log

Acknowledgement letter

No Client Consent Received letter

Delay in response letter

Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint

Response letter – Stage 1

Response letter – Stage 2

**Note** – This document is in two parts. You can select which one you prefer to use at each complaint stage:

1. **A process map** showing each step of the procedure and who is responsible for each action.

Clicking on the shadowed boxes of the process map will take you to more detail for that action, or to the relevant letter/form. When clicking a link to a letter/form, please press Ctrl + left click.

Click on  throughout the written procedure to go back to the process map.

2. **A written procedure.** Ignore  in the procedure.

**Select the stage you need on the next page.**

**Select the appropriate stage:**

**A general complaint:**

**Stage 1:** First receipt of a complaint

[Process Map](#)

[Written procedure](#)

**Stage 2:** The complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1

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[Written procedure](#)

**A complaint regarding a Director or MHHS Head of Service:**

**Stage 1:** First receipt of a complaint

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**Stage 2:** The complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1

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**A complaint regarding the Chief Executive:**

**Stage 1:** First receipt of a complaint

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**Stage 2:** The complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of stage 1

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[Written procedure](#)

## **General Complaint - Stage One**

**Acknowledgement to be sent within 3 days of receipt, and response letter within 10 days.**

**Receiving a complaint - by any method including in person, telephone, letter, email and social media**

If you receive a complaint in person or on the telephone, record the complaint on a Client Feedback form.

Where the complaint is taken in person, ask the complainant to sign to confirm the statement is accurate, and give them a complaints leaflet.

Pass the complaint to the MHHS Service Lead / Snr Housing & Property Servs Manager / LD Regional Manager.

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**MHHS Service Lead / Snr Housing & Property Servs Manager / LD Regional Manager:**

**Read the complaint, consider client consent and appoint Investigating Manager**

Client consent is needed when the complaint concerns a client but is received from somebody else (e.g. representative, family member).

The Investigating Manager will be a manager responsible for the area concerned, unless the complaint is about them, in which case their line manager will investigate.

If the complaint is complex (e.g. multiple services), discuss the choice of Investigating Manager with the Quality, Performance & Risk Manager.

**Complete the Complaint Monitoring Form part 1 and start the Complaint Activity and Actions Log**

Click for Complaint Monitoring form part one.

The Complaint Activity and Actions Log must be updated every time activity occurs throughout the investigation or when remedial actions are identified.

Email the Complaint Monitoring form to the complaints administrator and docs to the Investigating Manager.

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**Complaints Administrator create complaint record**

- Enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1
- Create a complaint record on In-Form
- Scan all docs received and save in complaints folder

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### **Investigating Manager send client consent letter if necessary (by email or post)**

Client consent is necessary where the client consent 'Yes' box has been ticked in section one of the monitoring form.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

### **Investigating Manager phone complainant**

This is to give the client/tenant a fair opportunity to set out their position.

However, some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

During the phone call, ensure issues are fully understood and immediate actions to help remedy the complaint are considered.

If the complainant is not the client, the client's personal information cannot be discussed until the client's consent is received.

Ask the complainant if they would like to be informed of the findings by telephone, or by letter only.

If you cannot get hold of the complainant after two attempts, continue to the next step and ensure the acknowledgement letter is sent within 3 days of complaint receipt.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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### **Investigating Manager send acknowledgement letter & complaints leaflet to complainant (email or post)**

The Investigating Manager must send the acknowledgement letter and complaints leaflet within 3 working days of Southdown receiving the complaint.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint' on The Source.

The acknowledgement must summarise the substance of the complaint and confirm, where not yet clear, that part of the process will be to look at what outcome the complainant is seeking.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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### **If the client consent letter was sent, has the client responded?**

If no – you cannot yet investigate the complaint. If this means the 10 day response deadline will not be met, send "No Client Consent Received" Letter (by email or post) and follow up with client if appropriate.

If the client has responded but does not give consent to Southdown sharing their personal information with the complainant for the purpose of this complaint, you cannot investigate the complaint. In which case send the 'No Client Consent Received' letter to the complainant. The procedure ends here unless the client changes their mind.

If the client has given consent, you can investigate the complaint.

## **Investigating Manager investigate complaint**

For guidance on investigating a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint' on The Source.

If appropriate the manager will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint.

If complainants raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.

The investigation must be completed and the response letter sent within 10 days of Southdown receiving the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation

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## **Will the response letter be sent within 10 working days of Southdown receiving the complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent with the 10 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

## **Investigating Manager inform complainant by telephone of findings and intended response**

A telephone call is to be made if agreed with the complainant during the telephone call at complaint acknowledgement stage. This is to give the client/tenant a fair opportunity to comment on findings before a final decision is made.

As mentioned before, some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

If you cannot get hold of the complainant after two attempts, continue to the next step and ensure the response letter is sent within 10 days of complaint receipt.

## **Complainant satisfied with response given on the telephone? - Investigate further/review?**

If the complainant is not satisfied with your intended response, let them know if there is anything more you can do. If you need time to consider this, tell them you will phone them back or will inform them in the response letter.

Continue the investigation if required and phone the complainant back if needed.

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### **Investigating Manager write response letter and send to the complaints admin team for proof reading**

Send a stage 1 response letter to the complainant within 10 working days of Southdown receiving the complaint (unless the delay in response letter has been sent).

Before sending to the complainant, send the letter to the complaints admin team for proof reading.

For guidance on responding, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

The response letter must summarise the complaint, explain the process of the investigation, detail the outcome and detail the next steps if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.

Check if your line/senior manager would like to see the letter before you send it.

### **Investigating Manager send response to complainant (by email or post) once received back from the complaints admin team**

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### **Lessons Learnt – MHHS Service Lead/Snr Housing & Property Servs Manager/LD Regional Manager**

Arrange a Lessons Learnt meeting with relevant staff members to discuss lessons learnt from the investigation, actions already identified/taken, and further actions required to improve Southdown services.

Record actions on the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

Send a copy of the minutes and Activity/Actions log to the complaints administrator who will attach them to the Lessons Learnt section of the complaint record in In-Form and add actions to the central Complaint Actions Log.

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### **Investigating Manager complete Complaint Monitoring form part 2 and send, with all papers, to the MHHS Service Lead / Snr Housing & Property Servs Manager / LD Regional Manager**

### **MHHS Service Lead / Snr Housing & Property Servs Manager / LD Regional Manager sign off monitoring form and pass all documents to the Complaints Administrator**

### **Complaints Administrator complete monitoring form and update complaint record**

- enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents/save in complaints folder

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**Complaints Administrator telephone the complainant and ask satisfaction questions 2 weeks after response letter (if not escalated to stage 2)**

Some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

Where the complainant cannot be phoned, send the questions by email or letter.

Ask the complainant the following questions and record on In-Form:

- Did you experience any barriers to making a complaint?
- Do you feel the person dealing with your complaint understood the issue?
- Do you feel your complaint was dealt with respectfully and empathically?
- Were Southdown's letters and other communications clear for you to understand?
- Were you satisfied with Southdown's response to your complaint?

If the complainant is not satisfied, ask which part exactly and advise them you will tell the investigating manager.

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**Investigating Manager consider complainant's feedback to satisfaction questions**

Decide if there is more we can do and, if so, inform the complainant.

**END OF GENERAL COMPLAINT - STAGE 1**

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## **General complaint - Stage Two**

**Acknowledgement to be sent within 3 days of receipt, and response letter within 20 days.**

### **Division Director / MHHS Head of Service:**

- Read stage 2 complaint, stage 1 response, and allocate investigating manager
- Complete Complaints Monitoring Form part 1 and pass, with the complaint, to the Complaints Administrator
- Send acknowledgement letter to complainant within 3 working days of receiving stage 2 complaint

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

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### **Complaints Administrator update complaint record:**

- Enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1
- Update the complaint record on In-Form

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### **Investigating Manager investigate the complaint**

The purpose of stage 2 investigation is to look into the investigation and outcome of stage 1, bearing in mind the points raised in the complainant's stage 2 complaint.

Where appropriate, the manager will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint or explain the outcome of their investigation and action to be taken as a result.

The investigation must be completed and the response letter sent within 20 days of Southdown receiving the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation.

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### **Will the response letter be sent within 20 days of Southdown receiving the complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent with the 20 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

### **Investigating Manager and Division Director / MHHS Head of Service discuss investigation.**

### **Investigating manager to investigate further if requested by the Director / MHHS Head of service.**



### **Investigating Manager inform complainant by telephone of findings and intended response**

This is to give the client/tenant a fair opportunity to comment on findings before a final decision is made.

Some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

If you cannot get hold of the complainant after two attempts, continue to the next step and ensure the response letter is sent within 20 days of complaint receipt.

### **Complainant Satisfied with Response? - Investigate further/review?**

If the complainant is not satisfied with your intended response, let them know if there is anything more you can do. If you need time to consider this, tell them you will call them back or will inform them by writing in the response letter.

Continue the investigation if required and phone the complainant back if needed, or send the response letter:

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### **Investigating Manager send response letter to the complaints admin team for proof reading**

Send the Stage 2 Response Letter within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint, unless the delay in response letter has been sent.

Before sending to the complainant, send the letter to the complaints admin team for proof reading.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

The response letter must summarise the complaint, explain the process of the investigation, and detail the outcome and actions.

**Investigating Manager send response to complainant (by email or post)** - once received back from the complaints admin team.

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### **Director / MHHS Head of Service arrange lessons learnt meeting**

The director/head will arrange a Lessons Learnt meeting with relevant staff members to discuss lessons learnt from the investigation, actions already identified and further actions required to improve Southdown services, where necessary.

Record actions on the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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**Investigating Manager complete complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to the Director / MHHS Head** (Director to sign the form if they are the investigating manager)

**Director / MHHS Head of Service sign-off complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs to the complaints administrator.**

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### **Complaints Administrator complete form and update complaint record**

- enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents/save in complaints folder

### **Complaints Administrator telephone the complainant and ask satisfaction questions 2 weeks after response letter**

Some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

Where the complainant cannot be phoned, send the questions by email or letter.

Ask the complainant the following questions and record responses on In-Form:

- Did you experience any barriers to making a complaint?
- Do you feel the person dealing with your complaint understood the issue?
- Do you feel your complaint was dealt with respectfully and empathically?
- Were Southdown's letters and any other communications clear for you to understand?
- Were you satisfied with Southdown's response to your complaint?

If the complainant is not satisfied, explain this is the end of Southdown's complaints procedure and that they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service/CQC/Local Authority, as detailed in the response letter.

Inform the investigating manager and Director/Head of Service of the question responses.

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## **END OF GENERAL COMPLAINT STAGE 2**

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## **Complaint Regarding a Director or MHHS Head of Service - Stage One**

**Acknowledgement to be sent within 3 days of receipt, and response letter within 10 days.**

### **Person Receiving the Complaint**

If you receive a complaint in person or on the telephone, record the complaint on a Client Feedback form. Where the complaint is taken in person, ask the complainant to sign to confirm the statement is accurate, and give them a complaints leaflet.

Pass the complaint to the Chief Executive.

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### **Chief Executive:**

- inform chair of the board of the complaint
- Complete Complaints Monitoring Form part 1 and send to the complaints administrator

### **Complaints administrator create complaint record**

The complaints administrator will date the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1 with date received and create a complaint record in the Complaints section on In-Form, using the information on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1.

### **Chief Executive - Send Client Consent Letter if Necessary**

Client consent is needed when the complaint concerns a client but is received from somebody else (e.g representative, family member).

Start the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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### **Chief Executive Telephone Complainant**

This is to give the client/tenant a fair opportunity to set out their position.

However, some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

During the phone call, ensure issues are fully understood and immediate actions to help remedy the complaint are considered.

If the complainant is not the client, the client's personal information cannot be discussed until the client's consent is received.

Ask the complainant if they would like a telephone call after the investigation to be informed of the findings, or a response letter only.

If you cannot get hold of the complainant after two attempts, continue to the next step and ensure the acknowledgement letter is sent within 3 days of complaint receipt.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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## **Chief Executive Send Acknowledgement Letter**

Acknowledge the complaint in writing within 3 working days of receipt using the [acknowledgement letter template](#).

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

The acknowledgement will summarise the substance of the complaint, who will be the Investigating Manager and, where not yet clear, explain that part of the process will be to look at what outcome the complainant is seeking.

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## **If The Client Consent Letter Was Sent, Has The Client Responded?**

If no – you cannot yet investigate the complaint. If this means the 10 day response deadline will not be met, send 'No Client Consent Received Letter' (by email or post) and follow up with client if appropriate.

If the client has responded but does not give consent to Southdown sharing their personal information with the complainant for the purpose of this complaint, you cannot investigate the complaint. In which case send the 'No Client Consent Received' letter to the complainant. The procedure ends here unless the client changes their mind.

If the client has given consent, you can investigate the complaint.

## **Chief Executive Investigate Complaint**

The Chief Executive will investigate the complaint, involving a member of the Management Board or the Remuneration & Nominations Committee Chair.

Where appropriate, meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint further or explain the outcome of their investigation and any action to be taken as a result of this.

For guidance on investigating a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint' on The Source.

If complainants raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.

The investigation must be completed and the response letter sent within 10 days of Southdown receiving the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation

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## **Will The Response Letter Be Sent Within 10 Days Of Southdown Receiving The Complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent with the 10 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

## **Chief Executive discuss findings with Chair of the Board if necessary**

## Chief Executive - Inform Complainant By Telephone Of Findings And Intended Response

A telephone call is to be made if agreed with the complainant during the telephone call at complaint acknowledgement stage. This is to give the client/tenant a fair opportunity to comment on findings before a final decision is made.

Some clients/tenants request not to be telephoned due to anxiety or other issues. Check complaint notes and client/tenant records, and only phone them if it is not noted that they should not be telephoned.

If you cannot get hold of the complainant after two attempts, continue to the next step and ensure the response letter is sent within 10 days of complaint receipt.

## Complainant Satisfied with Response - Investigate further/review?

If the complainant is not satisfied with your intended response, let them know if there is anything more you can do. If you need time to consider this, tell them you will call them back or will inform them in the response letter.

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## Chief Executive - Write Response to Complainant

Write a response letter to the complainant using the Stage 1 complaint response letter template.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint.

The **response letter** must summarise the complaint, explain the process of the investigation, detail the outcome and detail the next steps if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.

If you would like someone to review the letter before it is sent, contact the complaints administrator.

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## Chief Executive

- **Inform the Board of outcome**
- **Hold lessons learnt meeting with relevant staff**

Arrange a Lessons Learnt meeting with relevant staff members to discuss lessons learnt from the investigation, actions already identified and further actions required to improve Southdown services, where necessary.

Record actions on the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

A copy of the minutes and actions of this meeting must be passed to the complaints administrator who will attach them to the Lessons Learnt section of the complaint record in In-Form.

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**Chief Executive** - complete complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to the Complaints Administrator.

## **Complaints Administrator - Update Complaint Record**

Date the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2 with date received and update the complaint record in the Complaints section on In-Form.

Scan the form and all related complaint documents and save in the complaint folder.

## **Complaints Administrator - Telephone the complainant and ask satisfaction questions approximately 2 weeks after the response letter**

Ask the complainant the following questions and record on In-Form:

- Did you experience any barriers to making a complaint?
- Do you feel the person dealing with your complaint understood the issue?
- Do you feel your complaint was dealt with respectfully and empathically?
- Were Southdown's letters and any other communications clear for you to understand?
- Were you satisfied with Southdown's response to your complaint?

If the complainant is not satisfied, explain this is the end of Southdown's complaints procedure and that they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service/CQC/Local Authority, as detailed in the response letter.

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## **END OF STAGE ONE - COMPLAINT REGARDING A DIRECTOR OR MHHS HEAD OF SERVICE**

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## **Complaint Regarding a Director or MHHS Head of Service - Stage Two**

**Acknowledgement to be sent within 3 days of receipt, and response letter within 20 days.**

### **Chief Executive Arrange For Complaint and Forms To Be Emailed To The Chair Of The Board**

Complaint monitoring form 1

Activity & Actions Log

Acknowledgement letter

Complaints leaflet      Easy read version

Stage 2 response letter

Delay in response letter

Complaint monitoring form 2

Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint

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### **Chair of the Board:**

- Read complaint and stage 1 documents
- Chair to be investigating officer, or allocate another board member
- Complete Complaint Monitoring Form part 1 and pass to the Chief Exec or Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager, who will pass to the complaints administrator

### **Send Acknowledgement Letter & Complaints Leaflet to Complainant**

The Chair of the Board will send the acknowledge letter to the complainant within 3 working days of Southdown's receipt, using the acknowledgement letter template, and send the Complaints Leaflet.

The acknowledgement will summarise the substance of the complaint, explain who will investigate the complaint and, where not yet clear, explain that part of the process will be to look at what outcome the complainant is seeking.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

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### **Complaints Administrator Update Complaint Record:**

- Enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1
- Update the complaint record on In-Form

## **Investigating Manager Investigate Complaint**

The Investigating Manager will look into the complaint, consulting with others as necessary.

The purpose of stage 2 investigation is to look into the investigation and outcome of stage 1, bearing in mind the points raised in the complainant's stage 2 complaint.

Where appropriate, meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint or explain the outcome of their investigation and action to be taken as a result.

The investigation must be completed and the response letter sent within 20 days of Southdown receiving the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation.

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## **Will the response letter be sent within 20 days of Southdown receiving the complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent with the 20 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

## **Investigating Manager discuss findings with Chair of the Board and investigate further if necessary**

### **Investigating Manager - Send Response to Complainant**

Send a written response within 20 working days of receipt of the stage 2 complaint, using the Stage 2 Response Letter template, unless the delay in response letter has been sent.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

The response letter must summarise the complaint, explain the process of the investigation, detail the outcome, actions and the complainant's options if they are not satisfied with the response.

If you would like someone to review the letter before it is sent, contact the complaints administrator.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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## **Lessons Learnt Meeting**

The Chair or Chief Executive will arrange a Lessons Learnt meeting with relevant board members and staff to discuss lessons learnt from the investigation, actions already identified and further actions required to improve Southdown services, where necessary.

Record actions on the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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**Investigating Manager** - complete complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to Chair of the Board (Chair to sign the form if they are the investigating manager)

**Chair of the Board** – send all documents to the Chief Exec or Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager, who will pass to the complaints administrator for attaching to the In-Form complaint record.

**Complaints Administrator - Telephone the complainant and ask satisfaction questions approximately 2 weeks after the response letter**

Firstly, check complaint notes and In-Form records to ensure client/tenant is ok to take phone calls.

Ask the complainant the following questions and record on In-Form:

- Did you experience any barriers to making a complaint?
- Do you feel the person dealing with your complaint understood the issue?
- Do you feel your complaint was dealt with respectfully and empathically?
- Were Southdown's letters and any other communications clear for you to understand?
- Were you satisfied with Southdown's response to your complaint?

If the complainant is not satisfied, explain this is the end of Southdown's complaints procedure and that they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service/CQC/Local Authority, as detailed in the response letter.

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**END OF COMPLAINT PROCESS REGARDING A DIRECTOR OR MHHS HEAD OF SERVICE**

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## **Complaint Regarding the Chief Executive - Stage One**

**Acknowledgement to be sent within 3 days of receipt, and response letter within 10 days.**

### **Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager - Pass Complaint Forms & templates to Chair of the Board**

Complaint monitoring form 1

Complaint monitoring form 2

Complaint activity & actions log

Complaints Leaflet & Easy read version

Delay in response letter

Response letter – Stage 1

Acknowledgement letter

No Client Consent Received letter

Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint

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### **Chair of the Board:**

- **Read complaint**
- **Consider client consent** - Client consent is needed when the complaint concerns a client but is received from somebody else (e.g representative, family member)
- **Assign Investigating Manager** – can be yourself or board member
- **Complete Complaints Monitoring Form part 1** and send to the Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager, who will pass to the complaints administrator

### **Complaints Administrator - Create Complaint Record**

- Enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1
- Create a complaint record on In-Form
- Scan docs received and save in complaints folder

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### **Investigating Manager - Send Client Consent Letter if Necessary**

This is necessary where the client consent 'Yes' box has been ticked in section one of the monitoring form.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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## **Investigating Manager - Send Acknowledgement Letter & Complaints Leaflet to Complainant (by email or post)**

Acknowledge the complaint in writing using the acknowledgement letter template and send the complaints leaflet, within 3 working days of receipt of the complaint.

The acknowledgement must summarise the substance of the complaint and confirm, where not yet clear, that part of the process will be to look at what outcome the complainant is seeking.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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### **If the client consent letter was sent, has the client responded?**

If no – you cannot yet investigate the complaint. If this means the 10 day response deadline will not be met, send 'No Client Consent Received' letter (by email or post) and follow up with client if appropriate.

If the client has responded but does not give consent to Southdown sharing their personal information with the complainant for the purpose of this complaint, you cannot investigate the complaint. In which case send the 'No Client Consent Received' letter to the complainant. The procedure ends here unless the client changes their mind.

If the client has given consent, you can investigate the complaint.

## **Investigating Manager - Investigate Complaint**

For guidance on investigating a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

Where appropriate the investigating manager will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint or explain the outcome of their investigation and action to be taken.

If complainants raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant and the stage one response has not been issued. Where the stage one response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.

The investigation must be completed and the response letter sent within 10 days of Southdown receiving the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation.

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### **Will the response letter be sent within 10 days of Southdown receiving the complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent with the 10 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

**Investigating manager discuss findings with Chair of the Board**, or with another board member if the Chair is the investigating manager.

## **Send Response to Complainant (by email or post)**

Send a written response using the stage 1 response letter template within 10 working days of Southdown receiving the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

For guidance on responding, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

The response letter must summarise the complaint, explain the process of the investigation, detail the outcome and detail the next steps if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.

If you would like someone to review the letter before it is sent, contact the complaints administrator (via the Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager).

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## **Investigating manager or Chair of the Board hold lessons learnt meeting with relevant board members and staff**

Discuss lessons learnt from the investigation, actions already identified and further actions required to improve Southdown services, where necessary.

Record actions on the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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**Investigating Manager or Chair** - complete complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to the Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager.

**Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager** pass all docs to the complaints administrator

**Complaints administrator** - Complete Form, Update Complaint Record

- Enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- Update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents/save in complaints folder

**Complaints administrator - Phone the complainant and ask satisfaction questions approximately 2 weeks after the response letter**

Firstly, check complaint notes and In-Form records to ensure client/tenant is ok to take phone calls.

Ask the complainant the following questions and record on In-Form:

- Did you experience any barriers to making a complaint?
- Do you feel the person dealing with your complaint understood the issue?
- Do you feel your complaint was dealt with respectfully and empathically?
- Were Southdown's letters and other communications clear for you to understand?
- Were you satisfied with Southdown's response to your complaint?

If the complainant is not satisfied, ask which part exactly and advise them you will tell the investigating manager.

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**END OF STAGE 1 - COMPLAINT REGARDING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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## **Complaint Regarding the Chief Executive - Stage Two**

**Acknowledgement to be sent within 3 days of receipt, and response letter within 20 days.**

### **Chair of the Board:**

- Request letter and form templates from the Corporate Governance and Administration Team Manager (if not already received)
  - Complaint monitoring form 1
  - Complaint monitoring form 2
  - Complaint activity & actions log
  - Complaints Leaflet                      Easy read version
  - Delay in response letter
  - Response letter – Stage 2
  - Acknowledgement letter
  - No Client Consent Received letter
  - Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint

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- Read complaint and stage 1 documents
- Assign Investigating Manager role to external consultant or senior board member
- Complete Complaint Monitoring form part 1 and send to Corporate Governance and Administration Team leader, who will pass to the complaints administrator for processing

### **Chair of Board - Send Acknowledgement Letter & Complaints Leaflet to Complainant (by email or post)**

Send the acknowledgement letter (using letter template), and Complaints Leaflet to the complainant within 3 working days of Southdown's receipt of the stage 2 complaint.

The acknowledgement will summarise the substance of the complaint, confirm who will investigate the complaint and, where not yet clear, explain that part of the process will be to look at what outcome the complainant is seeking.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

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### **Investigating Manager - Investigate Complaint**

Look into the complaint, consulting with others as necessary.

The purpose of stage 2 investigation is to look into the investigation and outcome of stage 1, bearing in mind the points raised in the complainant's stage 2 complaint.

Where appropriate, meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint or explain the outcome of their investigation and action to be taken as a result.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation.

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**Investigating manager - Will the response letter be sent within 20 days of Southdown receiving the complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent within the 20 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

**Investigating Manager discuss findings with Chair of the Board**

Continue the investigation if necessary.

**Chair of Board - Will the response letter be sent within 20 days of Southdown receiving the complaint?**

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent within the 20 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

**Chair of the Board –** Discuss findings with a panel of Board members and make final decision.

**Chair of the Board - Send Response to Complainant (by email or post)**

Send a written response within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint, using the Stage 2 Response Letter template.

For guidance on responding to a complaint, refer to 'Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint'.

The response letter must summarise the complaint, explain the process of the investigation, detail the outcome, actions and the complainant's options if they are not satisfied with the response.

If you would like someone to review the letter before it is sent, contact the complaints administrator, via the Corporate Governance and Administration Team Manager

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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**Chair of the Board – Hold Lessons Learnt Meeting**

Arrange a Lessons Learnt meeting with relevant board members to discuss lessons learnt from the investigation, actions already identified and further actions required to improve Southdown services, where necessary.

Record actions on the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

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**Chair of the Board** - complete complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to the Corporate Governance & Admin Team Manager, for processing by the complaints administrator.

**Phone the complainant and ask satisfaction questions approximately 2 weeks after the response letter**

Firstly, check complaint notes and In-Form records to ensure client/tenant is ok to take phone calls.

Ask the complainant the following questions and record on In-Form:

- Did you experience any barriers to making a complaint?
- Do you feel the person dealing with your complaint understood the issue?
- Do you feel your complaint was dealt with respectfully and empathically?
- Were Southdown's letters and any other communications clear for you to understand?
- Were you satisfied with Southdown's response to your complaint?

If the complainant is not satisfied, explain this is the end of Southdown's complaints procedure and that they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service/CQC/Local Authority, as detailed in the response letter.

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**END OF COMPLAINT PROCESS REGARDING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**END OF PROCEDURE**

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Customer Complaints Procedure – Stage 1

Document Number: 1.10b

Issue: 12

Timeline

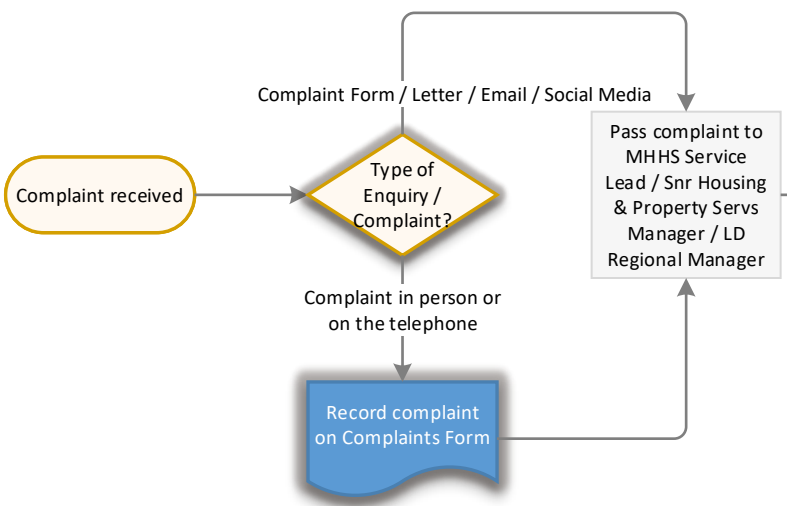
IMMEDIATE

DAY 1 – RECEIPT OF COMPLAINT

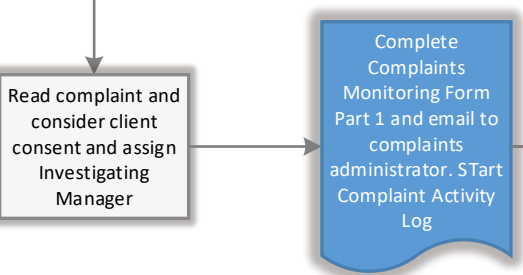
WITHIN 3 DAYS OF COMPLAINT RECEIPT

WITHIN 10 DAYS OF COMPLAINT RECEIPT

Staff Receiving Complaint



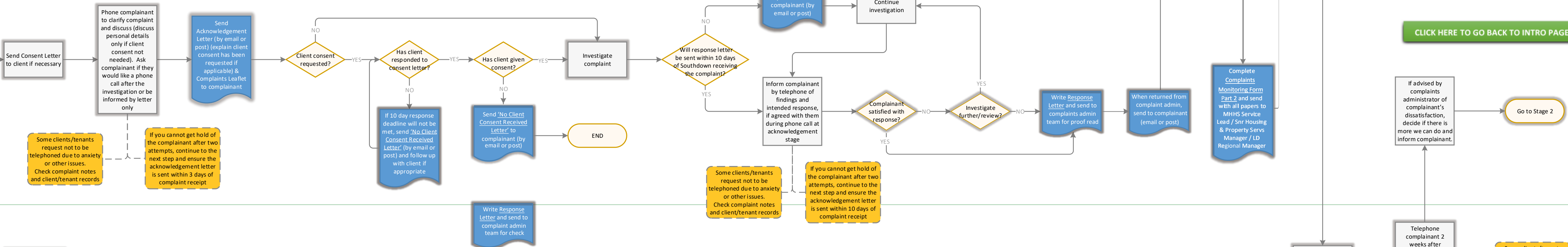
MHHS Service Lead / Snr Housing & Property Servs Manager / LD Regional Manager



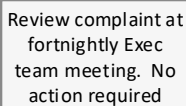
Staff emails and all communication must be concise, factual and contain only what is absolutely needed

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any letter/phone call/activity or identification/completion of remedial actions

Investigating Manager



Complaints Administrator



Exec Team

IMMEDIATE

DAY 1 – RECEIPT OF COMPLAINT

WITHIN 3 DAYS OF COMPLAINT RECEIPT

WITHIN 10 DAYS OF COMPLAINT RECEIPT

Timescale

Customer Complaints Procedure – Stage 2

Document Number: 1.10b Issue: 12

