

Complaints Procedure

Introduction

This 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 can take into account the complainant's personal circumstances and use their discretion where relevant.

The letter and form templates you will need throughout the process are all on The Source:

- Client Feedback Form
- Complaints Leaflet & Easy read version
- Complaint monitoring form 1
- Complaint monitoring form 2
- Complaint activity & actions log
- Acknowledgement letter
- Client Consent 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

TIMESCALES

	Acknowledgement	Response
Stage 1	The initial complaint must be acknowledged, <i>in writing, within 10 working days of Southdown receiving the complaint.</i>	The initial investigation must be completed and the response letter sent <i>within 10 working days of Southdown acknowledging the complaint</i> , unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.
Stage 2	The request to escalate to Stage 2 must be acknowledged, <i>in writing, within 3 working days of receiving the request.</i>	The Stage 2 investigation must be completed and the response letter sent <i>within 20 working days of Southdown acknowledging the stage 2 complaint</i> , unless a 'delay in response' letter has been sent.

COMPLAINTS REGARDING ENERGY SUPPLIES

Where a complaint relates to the provision, or billing, of energy, heating or hot water to a household and Southdown are deemed to be the energy supplier (e.g. due to the provision of a communal heating and/or hot water serving the tenanted area), Southdown should indicate that tenants also have recourse to the Ofgem, the energy regulator, should they remain unhappy at the end of Stage Two of Southdown's complaints procedure. Further information is available via: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/energy-advice-households/making-complaint-about-your-energy-supplier-or-network-operator>

General Complaint - Stage One

➤ Receiving a complaint - by any method, 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 relevant Manager.

➤ Relevant 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).

An investigating manager will be identified. This may be a manager responsible for the area concerned (unless the complaint is about them) or a manager from another area of the organisation. If the complaint is complex (e.g. multiple services), discuss the choice of Investigating Manager with the relevant service leads/managers.

Complete the Complaint Monitoring Form part 1

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, Complaint Monitoring form and Activity Log to the complaints administrator and Investigating Manager.

➤ Complaints Administrator create complaint record

- Enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1
- Create a complaint record on In-Form
- Attach all docs received to the In-Form complaint record

➤ **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.

➤ **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 in writing 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 working days of complaint receipt.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

➤ **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 our understanding of 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. The acknowledgement letter should clarify any aspects of the complaint Southdown is, and is not, responsible for.

➤ **Investigating Manager – If the client consent letter was sent, has the client responded?**

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

If the client has responded but does not give consent to Southdown sharing their personal information with the complainant for 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. Send all documents and letters to the complaints administrator explaining that the client does not give consent.

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 to the complaint. Where the additional issues 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 working days of Southdown acknowledging the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

If, due to staff absence or the complexity of the complaint, the response letter will not be sent within the 10 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post). - this will clearly set out the reasons for the delay in response. In cases where a tenant, shared owner or their advocate has raised a complaint, contact details of the Housing Ombudsman should be provided. Any extension to stage one should not be more than 10 days without a good reason.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log following any activity throughout the investigation, including noting any issues that have led to delays in complaint responses.

➤ **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.

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 working days of complaint acknowledgment.

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.

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

Send stage 1 response letter to the complainant within 10 working days of Southdown acknowledging 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 investigation, detail the outcome and 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**

➤ **Lessons Learnt – 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.

➤ **Investigating Manager complete Complaint Monitoring form part 2 and send, with all papers, to the Manager**

➤ **Manager approves monitoring form and pass all documents to the Complaints Administrator**

➤ **Complaints Administrator:**

- enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents
- add actions noted on the 'Activity and Actions Log' to the Complaints Actions Tracker

➤ **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.

➤ **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

General complaint - Stage Two

➤ **Senior Manager :**

- 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'.

➤ **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 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. Whilst the complainant is not obligated to set out their reason for seeking to have their complaint reviewed at Stage Two, those leading the Stage Two investigation are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why a resident remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.

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 working days of Southdown acknowledging the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

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). This should set out the reasons for the delay in this response. Any delay should be no more than 20 working days beyond the initial 20-day deadline without good reason. In cases where a tenant, shared owner or their advocate has raised a complaint, contact details of the Housing Ombudsman should be provided.

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

➤ **Investigating Manager and Senior Manager discuss investigation.**

➤ **Investigating manager to investigate further if requested by the Senior Manager.**

➤ **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, move on and ensure the response letter is sent within 20 working days of the stage 2 complaint acknowledgment.

➤ **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.

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

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

The Stage 2 Response Letter must be sent to the complainant within 20 working days of acknowledgment of the stage2 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, detail the outcome and actions, and the next steps if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.

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

➤ **Senior Manager arranges lessons learnt meeting**

The Senior Manager 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.

➤ **Investigating Manager completes Complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to the Senior Manager (Senior Manager to sign the form if they are the investigating manager)**

➤ **Senior Manager approves complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs to the Complaints Administrator.**

➤ **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
- add actions noted on the 'Activity and Actions Log' to the Complaints Actions Tracker

➤ **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 Chief Officer and Director/Head of Service of the question responses.

END OF GENERAL COMPLAINT STAGE 2

Complaint Regarding a Senior Manager - Stage One

➤ **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 member of C Suite.

➤ **C Suite member :**

- Inform Chief Executive 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 on In-Form, using the information on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 1.

➤ **C Suite member - 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).

➤ **C Suite member Telephone Complainant**

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

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 written response only.

If you cannot get hold of the complainant after two attempts, move on and ensure the acknowledgement letter is sent within 3 working days of complaint receipt.

Update the Complaint Activity and Actions Log.

➤ **C Suite member 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.

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

If you cannot yet investigate the complaint. If this means the 10 day response deadline will not be met, send the '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 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. Send all documents and letters to the complaints administrator explaining that the client does not give consent.

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

➤ **C Suite member Investigate Complaint**

The **C Suite member** will investigate the complaint

Where appropriate, meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint further.

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. Where the additions would unreasonably delay the response, they should be logged as a new complaint.

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

If the response letter will not be sent within the 10 day deadline, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

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

➤ **C Suite member discuss findings with Chief Executive**

➤ **C Suite member - 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, move on and ensure the response letter is sent within 10 working days of complaint acknowledgment.

➤ **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.

➤ **C Suite member - 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.

➤ **C Suite member**

- **Inform the Chief Executive 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.

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

➤ **C Suite member** - 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**

- enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents
- add actions noted on the 'Activity and Actions Log' to the Complaints Actions Tracker

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

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?

END OF STAGE ONE - COMPLAINT REGARDING A SENIOR MANAGER

Complaint Regarding a Senior Manager - Stage Two

➤ **C Suite member arrange for complaint and forms to be emailed to the Chief Executive**

Complaint monitoring form 1

Activity & Actions Log

Acknowledgement letter

Complaints leaflet [and](#) Easy read version

Stage 2 response letter

Delay in response letter

Complaint monitoring form 2

Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint

➤ **Chief Executive:**

- Read complaint and stage 1 documents
- Chief Executive to be investigating officer, or allocate to another C Suite member
- Complete Complaint Monitoring Form part 1 and pass to complaints administrator

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

The Chief Executive will send the acknowledgement 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.

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

➤ **Complaints Administrator Update Complaint Record:**

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

➤ **Investigating Officer 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 working days of Southdown acknowledging the complaint, unless more time is needed due to staff absence or complexity of the investigation.

If, 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 following any activity throughout the investigation.

➤ **Investigating Officer discuss findings with Chief Executive (or Chair of the Board if Chief Executive is investigating officer) and investigate further if necessary**

➤ **Investigating Officer - Send Response to Complainant**

Send a written response within 20 working days of acknowledgment 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.

➤ **Chief Executive - Lessons Learnt Meeting**

The 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.

➤ **Investigating Officer**

Complete complaints Monitoring Form part 2 and send with all docs, including lessons learnt minutes, activity & actions log, and letters to Chief Executive (Chief Executive to sign the form if they are the investigating manager). Send all documents to the complaints administrator.

➤ **Complaints Administrator**

- enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents
- add actions noted on the 'Activity and Actions Log' to the Complaints Actions Tracker

➤ **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.

END OF COMPLAINT PROCESS REGARDING A SENIOR MANAGER

Complaint Regarding the Chief Executive - Stage One

➤ **Corporate Admin Team - Pass Complaint Forms & templates to Chair of the Board**

Complaint monitoring form 1

Complaint monitoring form 2

Complaint activity & actions log

Complaints Leaflet [and](#) 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

➤ **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 Admin Team, 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
- Attach docs received to In-Form record

➤ **Investigating Officer - 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.

➤ **Investigating Officer - 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.

➤ **Investigating Officer - 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. Send all documents and letters to the complaints administrator explaining that the client does not give consent.

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

➤ **Investigating Officer - 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.

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

If complainants raise additional complaints during the investigation, these should be incorporated into the stage one response if they are relevant. Where the additions would unreasonably delay the response, the complaint should be logged as a new complaint.

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

➤ **Investigating Officer - Will the response letter be sent within 10 days of Southdown acknowledging 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).

➤ **Investigating Officer discuss findings with Chair of the Board**

or with another board member if the Chair is the investigating manager.

➤ **Investigating Officer - 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 acknowledging 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 Admin Team).

➤ **Investigating Officer 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.

➤ **Investigating Officer 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 Admin Team.

➤ **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
- add actions noted on the 'Activity and Actions Log' to the Complaints Actions Tracker

➤ **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.

END OF STAGE 1 - COMPLAINT REGARDING THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Complaint Regarding the Chief Executive - Stage Two

➤ **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 [and](#) Easy read version

Delay in response letter

Response letter – Stage 2

Acknowledgement letter

Supporting Guidance: How to Respond to a Complaint

- 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 Administration Team 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.

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

➤ **Investigating Officer - Investigate Complaint**

Consult 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.

➤ **Investigating manager - Will the response letter be sent within 20 working days of Southdown acknowledging 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, inform the Chair of the Board,

➤ **Chair of the Board** - send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

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

Continue the investigation if necessary.

➤ **Chair of Board – the investigation findings are to be discussed with board members, will the response letter be sent within 20 days of Southdown acknowledging the complaint?**

If not, send the 'Delay in Response Letter' to the complainant (by email or post).

➤ **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 acknowledging 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

➤ **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.

➤ **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 Admin Team , for processing by the complaints administrator.

➤ **Complaints Administrator**

- enter date received on the Complaints Monitoring Form Part 2
- update the complaint record on In-Form and attach all documents
- add actions noted on the 'Activity and Actions Log' to the Complaints Actions Tracker

➤ **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.