

SES KITE

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Complaints and Representations Policy and Practice

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*SES Kite Ltd (12634002) is a subsidiary company of
Specialist Education Services Topco Ltd (13159680)*

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	RATIONALE	2
3	SCOPE	2
4	CONCERN vs COMPLAINT	3
5	THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS	3
	5.1 Staff – Staff	4
	5.2 Staff of Themselves	4
	5.3 Young person – Staff	5
	5.4 Staff - Young person	5
	5.5 Young person – Young person	6
	5.6 Family	6
	5.7 Other Professionals	7
	5.8 Community - Supported accommodation	7
6	INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS	7
7	RESOLVING COMPLAINTS	8
8	COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES	8
	8.1 Preliminary	8
	8.2 Stage 1 - Early Resolution Stage	8
	8.3 Stage 2 - Formal Consideration	9
	8.4 Stage 3 (Formal) - Referral to the SES Operational Director	10
	8.5 Stage 4 (Formal) - Referral to the Directors	10
9	COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE ACTION OF THE REGISTERED MANAGER	11
10	CONFIDENTIALITY	12
11	IF ALL PREVIOUS AVENUES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED	12
12	STAFF TRAINING	12
13	APPENDICES	12
	APPENDIX 1: Flow Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints	
	APPENDIX 2: Suggested procedure for a Complaints Panel meeting dealing with a formal complaint	
	APPENDIX 3: Illustrative Complaints and Representations Procedures Recording Sheets (Stages 1 to 4)	

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the arrangements in place at SES Kite Supported Accommodation for receiving, recording, considering and responding to complaints and representations.

This policy has been created with reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- The Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023
- Regulation 31 — Complaints
- Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations including Quality Standards
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that young people, families, placing authorities, professionals and others are able to raise concerns, complaints or representations safely, openly and without fear of reprisal. Complaints will be listened to, taken seriously, responded to promptly and used to improve the quality of support provided by SES Kite.

2 RATIONALE

SES Kite Supported Accommodation does not operate in isolation. Young people, families, placing authorities, social workers, personal advisers, Ofsted, other professionals and members of the local community may raise concerns, make comments or submit complaints about the service.

Young people must feel confident that they can speak up if they are unhappy, worried, dissatisfied or feel that something is unfair. Complaints and representations are an important way of listening to young people's views, wishes and feelings, improving practice, strengthening safeguarding and improving the quality of support provided.

All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to fairly, promptly and sensitively. No young person will be subject to any reprisal, disadvantage or unfair treatment because they have made a complaint or representation, or because someone has complained on their behalf.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to complaints and representations made by young people, or on behalf of young people, about SES Kite Supported Accommodation. Complaints

may also be made by family members, placing authorities, social workers, personal advisers, advocates, other professionals, staff members or members of the public.

This policy covers complaints about the support provided by SES Kite, the conduct of staff, the way concerns have been managed, communication, the accommodation environment, or any matter that affects a young person's experience of the service.

This policy does not replace safeguarding procedures, whistleblowing procedures, staff grievance procedures, disciplinary procedures, or the complaints procedures of the placing authority. Where a complaint raises a safeguarding concern, this must be referred and managed in line with SES Kite's safeguarding procedures. Where a complaint relates to the placing authority, the young person must be supported to access the placing authority's own complaints procedure.

4 CONCERN vs COMPLAINT

There needs to be clarity about the difference between a concern and a complaint. Taking informal concerns seriously at the earliest stage will reduce the numbers that develop into formal complaints.

The key messages in this document deal with complaints but the underlying principle is that concerns ought to be handled, if at all possible, without the need for formal procedures. The requirement to have a complaints procedure need not in any way undermine efforts to resolve the concern informally.

In most cases the individual receiving the first approach may well be able to resolve issues on the spot. Informal concerns do not need to be recorded as formal complaints unless the person wishes to make a complaint, the concern remains unresolved, or the concern raises safeguarding, practice or quality assurance issues.

5 THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

5.1 STAFF - STAFF

Some degree of friction between staff may occur in work situations that can be pressured and stressful. Staff are expected to manage interpersonal difficulties appropriately, work together productively, and provide a positive example to young people, some of whom may need support to manage feelings, relationships or conflict.

Staff must never allow their annoyance with another member of the team to be acted out in front of the young people. It is damaging and unsettling to young people and staff morale to do so.

In almost all cases differences between staff should be managed by talking the matter through on a one to one basis without involving others. If this does not provide a resolution then staff should seek the guidance of their line manager and if still unsuccessful, the Registered Manager or their delegate.

Should a team member feel that a colleague has acted in a way which is contrary to the guidelines on policy and practice, staff must report this to their line manager or the Registered Manager as soon as practicably possible. Not to do so may place the service, and the needs and welfare of the young people we support, at risk.

Where the concern relates to safeguarding, professional conduct, boundaries, abuse, neglect, poor practice or the safety and welfare of a young person, it must be escalated immediately in line with SES Kite's safeguarding, whistleblowing, LADO and disciplinary procedures as appropriate.

Should the complaint be against the Registered Manager then staff must refer the matter to the Operational Director.

Any complaint will be properly, sensitively and carefully investigated by the Registered Manager or their delegate according to the procedures described within this policy. (Should the complaint involve the Registered Manager, then the Operational Director will investigate the complaint).

However, if after discussion with Registered Manager, or their delegate, the matter remains unresolved the formal complaints procedure will be initiated. The complainant will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and Practice and referred to the Operational Director.

Should the complaint be against the Operational Director then the staff member should, in the first instance, refer the matter to Registered Manager who will immediately notify the Directors. The Directors will issue a written acknowledgement that they are aware of the complaint to the original referring staff member. At this point the Directors will assess whether a complaints panel meeting needs to be held.

5.2 STAFF OF THEMSELVES

There is a risk that under pressure staff may at times behave inappropriately or in a way that does not reflect SES Kite's values, expectations or standards of practice. It is important that in such a situation the team member informs their line manager or the Registered Manager themselves. The situation is likely to become more difficult to resolve if the Registered Manager first becomes aware of a complaint via another team member, family, a young person or any other person.

Where the concern relates to safeguarding, professional boundaries, conduct or the safety and welfare of a young person, the matter must be escalated in line with SES Kite's safeguarding, whistleblowing, LADO and disciplinary procedures as appropriate.

5.3 YOUNG PERSON - STAFF

It is essential that the young people we support feel that they can complain should they feel that they have been treated unfairly, not listened to, spoken to inappropriately, unsupported, or if they are unhappy about any aspect of the

support they receive from staff. Whilst it is usually best if a young person talks the matter through with a member of their key-working team, such as their Key Worker or Support Worker, they have a right to expect that any member of staff will hear their complaint and pass it on to the Registered Manager or, where appropriate, their delegate.

Any complaint will be properly, sensitively and carefully investigated by the Registered Manager or their delegate according to the procedures described within this policy. Where a complaint is about a member of staff, that member of staff must not investigate or decide the outcome of the complaint.

However, if after discussion with the Registered Manager or their delegate the matter remains unresolved, the formal complaints procedure will be initiated. The complainant will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and Practice, offered appropriate support, and referred to the Operational Director.

Should the complaint be against the Registered Manager, the matter must be referred to the Operational Director.

Should the complaint be against the Operational Director, the matter should be referred to the Registered Manager, who will immediately notify the Directors, unless it would be inappropriate for the Registered Manager to be involved.

Staff should support young people to access the complaints and representations procedure, including support from an advocate, social worker, personal adviser, family member or another trusted person where appropriate. Young people must not be punished, treated unfairly or disadvantaged because they have made a complaint or because someone has complained on their behalf.

5.4 STAFF - YOUNG PERSON

Staff supporting young people may at times experience situations where a young person is distressed, upset, angry, verbally challenging, or struggling to manage conflict or relationships. Staff should not become indifferent to this or feel unsupported in responding to these situations. Staff should seek guidance, supervision and management support where needed.

Concerns relating to a young person's support needs, presentation, behaviour or risks should not usually be treated as a complaint against the young person. Such concerns should be managed through support planning, risk assessment, behaviour support, incident reporting, safeguarding procedures, key-work, restorative discussion, supervision and management oversight as appropriate.

Where a staff member feels unsafe, unsupported, or concerned about how best to support a young person, they should raise this with their line manager or the Registered Manager so that appropriate support, guidance and risk management can be put in place.

If, after discussion with the Registered Manager or their delegate, the staff member remains concerned about the way the matter has been managed by the service, the appropriate internal procedure will be identified. This may include supervision, line

management, whistleblowing, grievance, safeguarding or, where the concern relates to the service's response, the formal complaints procedure.

5.5 YOUNG PERSON - YOUNG PERSON

Young person complaints about other young people should be dealt with the same rigour as complaints from other sources. Young people supported at an SES Kite are vulnerable and may feel threatened, as in the past they may not have been listened to appropriately. It is particularly important that staff leave young people feeling that they have been properly listened to; their feelings and anxieties understood; and their complaints properly considered. Whilst it is usually best if a young person talks the matter through with a member of their Key Working team, they have a right to expect that any member of staff will hear their complaint and pass it on to the Registered Manager or, where appropriate, their delegate.

Any complaint will be properly, sensitively and carefully investigated by the Registered Manager or their delegate according to the procedures described within this policy.

However, if after discussion with the Registered Manager or their delegate the matter remains unresolved the formal complaints procedure will be initiated. The complainant will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and Practice and referred to the Operational Director.

Staff should be aware of the need to support young people in accessing the complaints and representations procedure and should inform young people of their right to representation or support from someone external to the supported accommodation.

5.6 FAMILY

Family members who are unhappy about any aspect of the young person's support or experience at the supported accommodation should make an appointment to see the Registered Manager or their delegate. The Registered Manager or their delegate will discuss the complaint with the family and involve other staff where appropriate. The young person's views, wishes and feelings should be considered wherever appropriate, taking account of confidentiality, safeguarding and the placing authority's arrangements.

Any complaint will be properly, sensitively and carefully investigated by the Registered Manager or their delegate according to the procedures described within this policy. Usually, because of close working relationships with family members, problems or worries can be easily resolved at this stage.

However, if after discussion with the Registered Manager or their delegate the matter remains unresolved the formal complaints procedure will be initiated. The complainant will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and Practice and referred to the Operational Director.

The formal procedure allows for family members to attend a panel hearing and be accompanied if they so wish, just as any other complainant.

Staff should be sensitive to the fact that family members may require support in accessing the complaints and representations procedure.

5.7 OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Professionals who are unhappy about any aspect of a young person's support or experience at the supported accommodation should make an appointment to see the Registered Manager or their delegate. The Registered Manager or their delegate will discuss the complaint and involve other staff where appropriate.

Any complaint will be properly, sensitively and carefully investigated by the Registered Manager or their delegate according to the procedures described within this policy. Usually, because of close working relationships with other professionals, problems or concerns can easily be resolved at this stage.

However, if after discussion with the Registered Manager or their delegate the matter remains unresolved the formal complaints procedure will be initiated. The complainant will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and Practice and referred to the Operational Director.

5.8 COMMUNITY - SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Members of the community who are concerned about any aspect of the supported accommodation's practice, staff conduct, communication, boundaries, the accommodation environment, or any other matter reasonably relating to SES Kite Supported Accommodation should contact the Registered Manager.

Any complaint will be properly, sensitively and carefully investigated by the Registered Manager or their delegate according to the procedures described within this policy. The Registered Manager will consider the concern fairly and proportionately, while maintaining confidentiality and protecting the privacy and dignity of young people.

However, if after discussion with the Registered Manager or their delegate the matter remains unresolved the formal complaints procedure will be initiated. The complainant will be given a copy of the Complaints Policy and referred to the Operational Director.

6 INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

At each stage outlined below, the person investigating the complaint should ensure that they:

The person investigating the complaint must not be the person who is the subject of the complaint, or someone whose involvement would affect the fairness or independence of the investigation.

- establish **what** has happened so far, and **who** has been involved;
- clarify the nature of the complaint and what remains unresolved;
- meet with the complainant or contact them (if unsure or further information is necessary);

- clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- speak with those involved in the matter and/or those complained of, allowing them to be accompanied if they wish;
- conduct the interview with an open mind and be prepared to persist in the questioning;
- keep notes of the interview.

7 **RESOLVING COMPLAINTS**

At each stage in the procedure everyone should keep in mind ways in which a complaint can be resolved. It might be sufficient to acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, it may be appropriate to offer one or more of the following:

- an apology;
- an explanation;
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better;
- an assurance that the event complained of will not recur;
- an explanation of the steps that have been taken to ensure that it will not happen again;
- changes to the young person's support plan, risk assessment or day-to-day support where appropriate;
- an undertaking to review policies in light of the complaint.

It would be useful if complainant's were encouraged to state what actions they feel might resolve the problem at any stage. An admission that someone could have handled the situation better is not the same as an admission of negligence.

An effective procedure will identify areas of agreement between the parties. It is also of equal importance to clarify any misunderstandings that might have occurred as this can create a positive atmosphere in which to discuss any outstanding issues.

8 **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

8.1 PRELIMINARY

Any person receiving what appears to be a complaint should ascertain whether it is indeed a **concern** being raised or a **complaint**. This should be done by asking the person concerned a direct question to clarify. This is a significant first step as concerns can usually be dealt with swiftly and without formal recording. Should the person concerned wish their comments to be dealt with as a complaint then the subsequent procedures will apply.

8.2 STAGE 1 – EARLY RESOLUTION STAGE

Complainant's should be provided with an opportunity to discuss any complaint with their Line Manager (or Support Worker in the case of a young person) who will try to clarify with the complainant the nature of the issue; the outcome the complainant is

looking for, and assure them that the supported accommodation will investigate it fully.

The Line Manager (or Support Worker) will make sure that the complainant is clear what action has been agreed and arrange for the matter to be put in writing if it is apparent that that is the best way of making things clear. Complaints at this stage should usually be addressed within 7 calendar days.

All complaints reaching this stage will be logged in the Complaints Book, recording briefly:

- who made the complaint,
- the date and nature of the complaint,
- action taken and the outcome of the complaint.

The Book is kept securely in the main office together with a file of any Recording Sheets (and any additional documentation) that accompanies the entry.

Complainant's will be made aware of the procedure for considering their concerns further should they not be satisfied after this informal stage has been completed.

The Complaints and Representations Procedures Recording Sheet, Stage 1 (see Appendices), should be completed by the person handling the complaint. Written records will therefore be kept of all complaints indicating whether they were resolved at this first stage, or whether they proceed to formal consideration (Stage 2).

8.3 STAGE 2 - FORMAL CONSIDERATION

Where a complainant has made an approach to the supported accommodation through the Early Resolution Stage and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write, or be supported to have their concerns recorded, to the Registered Manager giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration.

All complaints reaching this stage will be logged in the Complaints Book and acknowledged in writing by the supported accommodation and copied to the Operational Director for information.

The Registered Manager will seek any clarification necessary about the complaint, including interviewing the complainant where necessary.

The Registered Manager will also seek any necessary advice on the matter and investigate it sensitively and proportionately.

The Registered Manager will make a response within 7 calendar days. The complainant will be notified (in writing if appropriate) of the outcome of the complaint.

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this first formal stage they have 28 calendar days from the date of the Registered Manager's letter to register the complaint with the Operational Director.

The Complaints and Representations Procedures Recording Sheet, Stage 2 (see Appendices), should be completed.

8.4 STAGE 3 (FORMAL) - REFERRAL TO THE OPERATIONAL DIRECTOR

The Operational Director will only consider complaints that have already progressed through stages 1 and 2 outlined in this procedure, with the exception of a complaint against the Registered Manager.

On receipt of a complaint, or a complaint recorded on the complainant's behalf, the Operational Director will:

- immediately log and acknowledge receipt of the complaint;
- check that the complaint has already completed Stages 1 and 2;
- check that the complaint has been made within 28 calendar days of the Stage 2 response;
- seek any clarification necessary about the nature of the complaint;

The Operational Director will meet with the complainant where appropriate. At this stage of the process the complainant may be represented, supported or accompanied at the meeting with the Operational Director.

The Operational Director will also seek any necessary advice on the matter and investigate it sensitively and proportionately.

The complainant will be notified (in writing if appropriate) of the outcome of the complaint within 7 calendar days of the meeting.

Where a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of this second formal stage they have 28 calendar days from the date of the Operational Director's letter to register the complaint with the Directors.

The Complaints and Representations Procedures Recording Sheet, Stage 3 (see Appendices), should be completed.

8.5 STAGE 4 (FORMAL) – REFERRAL TO DIRECTORS

Where a complainant has made an approach to the supported accommodation through the first three stages and is not satisfied with the outcome, they should write, or be supported to have their complaint recorded, to the Directors giving details of their concerns and asking for the matter to be given further consideration. The Directors will only consider complaints that have already progressed through stages 1, 2 and 3 outlined in this procedure, with the exception of a complaint against the Operational Director.

On receipt of a written complaint, or a complaint recorded on the complainant's behalf, the Director will:

- immediately log and acknowledge receipt of the complaint;
- check that the complaint has already completed Stages 1, 2 and 3;

- check that the 28 day period since Stage 3 was complied with;
- seek any clarification necessary about the nature of the complaint;
- consider arrangements and configuration of the Complaints Panel
- arrange for the Complaints Panel to consider the complaint as soon as it is practical to do so; and
- invite the complainant and any representative to the meeting.

A Complaints Panel consists of a Director and two others not involved with the matters detailed in the complaint. One panel member will be independent of the management and running of the supported accommodation and one could be an additional Director.

The complainant may be accompanied to the hearing if they wish. The complainant or their representative will be given an opportunity to address the panel. A detailed procedure covering the conduct of this meeting is attached as an appendix to this document.

The Remit of The Complaints Panel may be any or some of the following:

- not uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- uphold the complaint in whole or in part;
- decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint;
- recommend changes to the young person's support, risk assessment or day-to-day arrangements where appropriate.

The Chairperson of the panel will notify in writing the outcome of meeting to the complainant and Operational Director within 7 calendar days.

The Complaints and Representations Procedures Recording Sheet, Stage 4 (see Appendices), should be completed.

At the request of Ofsted inspectors, SES Kite will provide a statement containing a summary of any complaints made during the preceding 12 months and the action taken in response to each complaint.

9 COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE ACTION OF THE REGISTERED MANAGER

Given their role in the management of the supported accommodation, some complaints that initially seem to be about the Registered Manager may in fact be more general complaints about the service. Such complaints should be dealt with as general complaints and are covered by the procedure contained in this document.

Where there is a specific complaint about the conduct of a member of staff, including the Registered Manager, it may be more appropriate for it to be considered under safeguarding, LADO, disciplinary or whistleblowing procedures, depending on the nature of the concern. The findings and outcomes of those processes may be confidential.

10 **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All correspondence, statements and records of complaints will be kept confidential and stored securely. Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to consider, investigate or respond to the complaint. Confidentiality will be maintained unless information needs to be shared for safeguarding, legal, regulatory or professional reasons.

11 **IF ALL PREVIOUS AVENUES HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED**

In the event of all procedures having been followed and the complaint is not resolved, further representation can be made to:

- **Ofsted** – Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD; 0300 123 1231; enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk ; <https://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

12 **STAFF TRAINING**

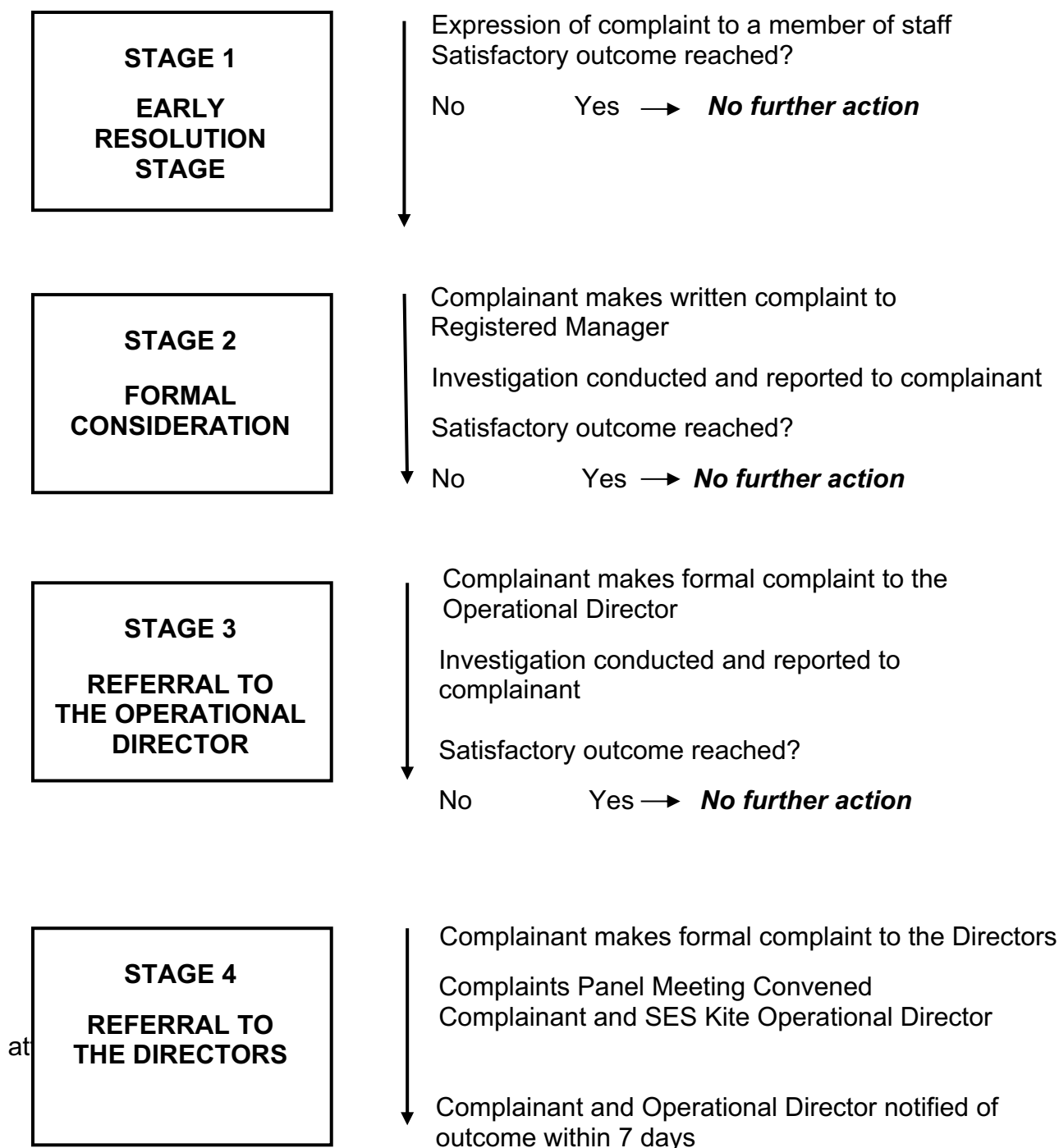
All staff will receive training during induction and then subsequently periodic refreshers exploring a range of issues including what constitutes a complaint, how to respond to a complaint, the procedure for dealing with an informal concern and how this is recorded where appropriate, the procedure to follow should a complaint not be dealt with promptly by informal means, including who should be notified and the keeping of records, how to complain to someone outside of the supported accommodation, how to support young people in making a complaint, how to support access to advocacy or external advice, and how to ensure young people are not subject to any reprisal, disadvantage or unfair treatment because they have complained or because someone has complained on their behalf.

13 **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1:	<i>Flow Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints</i>
APPENDIX 2:	<i>Suggested procedure for a Complaints Panel meeting dealing with a formal complaint</i>
APPENDIX 3:	<i>Illustrative Complaints and Representations Procedures Recording Sheets (Stages 1 to 4)</i>

APPENDIX 1

Flow Chart: Stages for Handling Complaints



If at this point a satisfactory outcome is not reached the complainant will be given appropriate contact details as described later in this policy document.

Suggested procedure for a Complaints Panel meeting dealing with a formal complaint

Meetings should be managed in a way that is fair, confidential and accessible. Where the complainant is a young person, account must be taken of their age, understanding, wishes and feelings, communication needs and emotional wellbeing. It may not be appropriate for all contributors to be present at the same time, particularly during items 2 and 3.

The Panel may choose to invite, and/or examine written contributions from any members of the team, or persons relevant to the complaint.

The Panel will judge the appropriateness of which part of the meeting the various contributors attend. Witnesses are only required to attend for the part of the hearing in which they give their evidence.

1. The Chair opens the meeting explaining that the purpose of the meeting is to listen to the complainant.
2. The complainant, or their representative presents their case stating the issues clearly. Any witnesses on behalf of the Complainant are heard.
3. Panel members, and any representative of the Placing Authority where appropriate, have an opportunity to ask questions of the Complainant (or any witnesses) seeking clarification.
4. The Operational Director provides details of how the complaint has been handled and details of any action taken. Any witnesses on behalf of the Operational Director are heard.
5. The Complainant or their representative, Panel members and any representative of the Placing Authority have an opportunity to ask questions of the Operational Director or their witnesses.
6. The Panel may at this point request and/or examine contributions from any other party.
7. These contributors may be asked questions by Panel members, and any representative of the Placing Authority (if applicable), the complainant and/or the Operational Director.
8. The Operational Director sums up.
9. The complainant or their representative sums up.
10. The Operational Director, complainant, representatives and others leave to allow the Complaints Panel to consider the complaint.
11. The chair of the Panel explains that the complainant and relevant parties will receive in writing the Panel's findings and recommendations (usually within 7 calendar days of the meeting).

APPENDIX 3

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COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS PROCEDURES RECORDING SHEETS

Stage 1: Early Resolution

Person making complaint: Date:

Person dealing with complaint:

Nature of complaint:

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Action taken in response to the complaint

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Outcome of any investigation

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Was this complaint addressed within 7 calendar days?

YES/NO

Resolved to satisfaction of complainant

YES/NO

Is this complaint moving to Stage 2 of the complaint's procedure?

YES/NO

Complaints Book completed

☐

Monitored by Registered Manager: Date:

Staff / Staff		Staff / Young person	
Young person / Staff		Staff of themselves	

Young person / Young person		Family	
Other Professionals		Community / Supported accommodation	

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COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS PROCEDURES RECORDING SHEETS

Stage 2: Formal Consideration

Person making complaint:

Date written complaint received by Registered Manager:

Date of acknowledgement and copy to Operational Director

Action taken in clarification of the complaint and outcome:

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Was the outcome of the complaint given to the complainant within 7 calendar days?

YES/NO

Stage 2 response/outcome letter attached

7

Stage 1 sheet attached with any additional paperwork ☐

Completed by Registered Manager: Date:

Monitored by Operational Director: Date:

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COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS PROCEDURES RECORDING SHEETS

Stage 3: Referral to the Operational Director

Person making complaint:

Date dealt with at Stage 1: Date dealt with at Stage 2:

Date complaint received, logged and acknowledged by Operational Director:

Was the complaint registered in writing within 28 days
from the Registered Manager's letter?YES/NO

Action taken in clarification of the complaint

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Date of meeting with complainant:

Name of person accompanying complainant:

Was the outcome of the complaint given to the complainant within 7 calendar days?
YES/NO

Stage 3 response/outcome letter attached ☐

Stage 1 and 2 sheets attached with any additional paperwork ☐

Any other relevant information?

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Completed by Operational Director: Date:

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COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS PROCEDURES RECORDING SHEETS

Stage 4: Referral to the Directors

Person making complaint:

Dates dealt with at Stage 1: Stage 2: Stage 3:

Date complaint received, logged and acknowledged by Director:

Was the complaint registered in writing within 28 days from the Operational Director's letter? YES/NO

Date of Complaints Panel meeting with complainant:

Names of the 2 additional representatives: 1.
(Please indicate independent person(s)) 2.

Name of person accompanying complainant:

Was the outcome of the complaint given to the complainant within 7 calendar days?
YES/NO

Stage 4 response/outcome letter attached ☐

Stage 1, 2 and 3 sheets attached with any additional paperwork ☐

Any other relevant information?

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Completed by Director: Date:

Completed or Monitored by Director: Date: