



BISHOPSGROVE SUPPORTED STUDENT ACCOMMODATION COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure consistency of approach towards handling complaints and meet the expectations of service users.
- 1.2 To achieve the highest possible standard of service provision as defined in the Student Charter.
- 1.3 To encourage service users to be involved in all aspects of Bishopsgrove development.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 Bishopsgrove takes a positive approach to dealing with complaints and welcomes feedback on how it can improve the service it delivers. Bishopsgrove aims to resolve all complaints as quickly, thoroughly and informally as possible.

2.2 **A complaint is defined as:**

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the quality of service, actions or lack of action by Bishopsgrove, its contractors or its staff affecting the complainant as an individual or group of individuals, whether they are students or not. This is irrespective of whether the complaint is deemed justified by the member of staff or not”.

- 2.3 Bishopsgrove and its Sub-Management Advisory Committee will also undertake to monitor all complaints to ensure they are used to improve the quality of service provided.
- 2.4 Service users in particular will be provided with the support that they need in order to make their views known. Bishopsgrove will ensure that service users are not disadvantaged or treated less favourably as a result of complaining.
- 2.5 A copy of the complaints policy and procedure can be requested from the reception. Information is also published in the student’s handbook. The process of complaining will be introduced during a student’s induction to Bishopsgrove and explained thoroughly too all non Bishopsgrove students upon complaint.
- 2.6 This policy does not relate to grievances made by students about other students. These will be addressed during student or house meetings. The policy covers complaints or comments about the services that we provide, how they are provided, and those who provide and manage them.
- 2.7 All complaints of harassment or bullying will be addressed in line with Bishopsgrove Harassment and Anti bullying Policy and Procedure.
- 2.8 Bishopsgrove aims to make the process of complaining as non-threatening and as open as possible and encourages the service users to bring a friend or advocate if

this makes them feel more comfortable. If appropriate, Bishopsgrove or complainant may also elect take advice from external agencies/professionals i.e. TUSLA.

3. PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

- 3.1 The LGMA Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure 2017 aims to encourage employees/workers to report internal any concerns, as soon as possible, they may have regarding potential wrongdoing in the workplace, in a manner provided by the Protected Disclosures Act 2014; and in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated, where appropriate, and their confidentiality will be respected, in the manner provided by the Protected Disclosure Act 2014;
- 3.2 To highlight that it is always appropriate to raise such concerns when they are based on a reasonable belief irrespective of whether any wrongdoing is fact subsequently identified;
- 3.3 To provide employees/workers with guidance on how to raise concerns
- 3.4 To reassure employees/workers that they can report relevant wrongdoings without fear of penalisation;
- 3.5 Any employee/worker who has a reasonable belief to one or more of the relevant wrongdoings listed within the LGMA Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure 2017, should disclose the information directly to the Designated Officer, John Ger O’Riordan, Senior Executive Officer, Corporate and External Affairs Directorate on 021 4924351 or email john oriordan@corkcity.ie. There is a standard reporting form for making a Disclosure attached to the LGMA Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure 2017 (Appendix 1).
- 3.6 It is important to distinguish between a complaint/grievance and a protected disclosure. Examples to guide you are listed within the LGMA Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure 2017, page 4 and 5. Staff and Workers are to sign understanding of both the LGMA Protected Disclosures Policy and Procedure 2017 and this Complaints Policy and Procedure to help prevent using the wrong reporting procedure and protect personal confidentiality.

4. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- 4.1 At this point staff should make it clear to the complainant that the complaints procedure is subject to Bishopsgrove Confidentiality Policy, and in particular circumstances, details of the complaint whether formal or informal may need to be discussed with other appropriate individuals or agencies.

4.2 Stage One

We hope to resolve every problem at this stage. Quite simply, a complainant or their advocate should inform a member of staff about their complaint – this can be in person, by completing a Bishopsgrove complaint form (Appendix 1), by letter, by e-mail or over the telephone. However, a formal complaint shall be place in writing. Staff should clarify the following:

- Clarify the complaint, include, times, dates, names etc
- Clarify what outcome the complainant would like to see
- Check whether he/she needs support of any kind (e.g. for poor sight, hearing or language need)

- Explain the investigation/complaints procedure
- Ensure the complainant is aware of you next intentions

4.3 The complainant's formal complaint will be acknowledged in writing (Appendix 2). The letter will include a unique reference log number and the complaint will be recorded in Bishopsgrrove complaints log. The letter will also provide the complainant with the name of the key member of staff dealing with their complaint. The key member of staff who has accepted the formal complaint will endeavour to resolve the matter immediately. Where this is not possible, the key member of staff will respond in writing within ten working days. Serious complaints or a complaint about a member of staff will be given priority.

4.4 **Every complaint will be monitored by the Cork Foyer Project Manager. Should the complaint be of a serious nature or about a member of staff, the complaint will bypass stage one of the procedure. The complainant will be advised to follow the procedure for Stage 2 or 3.**

4.5 Contacting the "customer" following a complaint can achieve two things – an acknowledgement of the complaint, giving the staff member an opportunity to apologise immediately, and the opportunity to clarify the details of the complaint. This can start the investigation off on the right foot, saving time in the long run, and defuse the situation.

4.6 **Stage Two**

If the complainant is unhappy that the complaint has not been resolved, the formal complaint can be sent directly to the Cork Foyer Manager. The Cork Foyer Manager will respond within five working days from receiving the complaint. The complainant may be invited to meet with the Cork Foyer Manager and/or a senior member of staff from their supporting organisation (if more appropriate) to explain the situation in person.

4.7 Where the complaint involves an allegation of misconduct or dishonesty by a particular member of staff, the initial investigation should be carried out by the Manager of that particular member of staff, following their own internal complaints procedures. Such an investigation must be properly documented as it may lead to disciplinary action. If at any point in the investigation this seems likely, the Cork Foyer Manager and other Sub-Management Advisory Committee members shall be informed and kept informed.

4.8 In the event the Cork Foyer Manager is the accused, the investigation will be led by the Director of Housing & Community Services and the Chair of the Foyer Management Committee at stage 3 or 4 of the complaints procedure. In the event that the accused is a Manager of a partner agency, their representing organisation will appoint an investigator. The appointed investigator shall keep the Director of Housing & Community Services and the Chair of the Foyer Management Committee informed.

4.9 **Stage Three**

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the action taken by staff members and the Cork Foyer Manager/Partner Agency Manager, the formal complaint will be put forward to the Chair of the Foyer Management Committee, or an appropriate

equivalent for complaints pertaining to a partner agency i.e. the North Lee Care Manager, who will fully investigate the complaint. The complainant may also write to the Chair or appointed equivalent to ensure that their position is fully understood. The complainant may be invited to meet with the Chair or a senior representative from the representing agency to present their complaint in person. The Chair or senior representative will respond within ten working days.

4.10 Stage Four

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with how the complaint has been addressed they may also write to the Director of Housing & Community Services who will investigate that all the correct policies and procedures have been followed. The complainant may be invited to meet with the Director of Housing & Community Services to explain the situation in person. Director of Housing & Community Services will aim to respond within ten working days.

- 4.11 The Director of Housing and Community Services and the Chair of the Foyer Management Committee should be consulted immediately on receiving a complaint from local Councillors or TD's.
- 4.12 Complaints from non students will follow the same procedure. Examples of non students include: former students, neighbours, contractors, etc.
- 4.13 All parties involved with the complaints process should aim to complete all four stages within 6 weeks of receiving the initial complaint.

5. RIGHT OF APPEAL

- 5.1 The complaints & appeals system operated by Bishopsgrove does not preclude you from using other external offices to handle your complaint e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau or a Law Agent.

6. RECORDING & MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 All complaints, whether considered formal or informal, serious or trivial will be recorded on a central Log. Staff must ensure that comprehensive records are kept of the more serious complaints (written and verbal).
- 6.2 A satisfaction survey (Appendix 3) will be sent to complainants on a periodic basis to help monitor the effectiveness of this Policy and Procedure. If procedures are amended because of a complaint or as a result of feedback from the satisfaction survey, the complainant should be informed of the changes – and thanked for helping Bishopsgrove to improve the service it provides.
- 6.3 The Bishopsgrove Sub-Management Advisory Committee has the responsibility of monitoring the performance of Bishopsgrove which includes the handling of complaints.

7. Training

- 7.1 All employees should have knowledge of the complaints policy and procedures and where to direct customers or how to deal with complaints. The quality of complaints management will depend on the skills of the employees who implement it.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

Complainant Makes Complaint

In Person

By Telephone



By Email

By Letter

Stage 1 Complaint

Discuss your complaint with a member of staff on duty. If necessary, you may request a copy of the Bishopsgrove Complaints Policy and Procedure. Your complaint will receive a unique log number for reference. A serious complaint or complaint about a staff member will be given priority and the complainant will be advised to follow stage 2 or stage 3 of this procedure



Acknowledgement Response Time 10 Working Days

Stage 2 Review/Complaint

If you are unhappy with the action taken to resolve your complaint during Stage 1, or you would prefer that your complaint is addressed by the Foyer Manager/Your Agency Manager



Response Time 5 Working Days

Stage 3 Review

If you are unhappy with the action taken to resolve your problem during Stage 1 or stage 2, or your complaint is about the Foyer Manager/Agency Manager. Your complaint will be referred / reviewed by the Chair of the Foyer Management Committee or appointed equivalent for complaints pertaining to a Partner Agency.



Response Time 10 Working Days

Stage 4 Review

If you are unhappy with the action taken to resolve your problem during Stages 1 to 3, the matter will be reported to the Director of Housing and Community Services who will review your complaint and investigate that the correct Policy & Procedure has been followed.



Response Time 10 Working Days

Stage 5 Independent Appeal

The complaints and appeals system operated by Bishopsgrover does not preclude you from using other external offices to handle your complaint e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau or a Law Agent

BISHOPSGROVE SUPPORTED STUDENT ACCOMMODATION COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT'S DETAILS

Title	Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms
First Name	<input type="text"/>
Surname	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 1	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 2	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 3	<input type="text"/>
Phone (Home)	<input type="text"/>
Phone (Work)	<input type="text"/>
Phone (mobile)	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address	<input type="text"/>

Details of complaint – please attach a separate sheet of paper, if required.

How would you like to see this matter resolved?

Action Taken:

[Empty rectangular box for recording action taken]

Please use addition pages if required.

Appendix 2

Ref: (insert complaint log number/initials of staff dealing with it).

Date:

Name of complainant
Address

Dear

RE:

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your complaint regarding..... Your personal log number is (insert complaint log number).

The matter will be investigated by (insert name of staff) and you will receive a reply within five working days from the date of this letter.

I enclose a copy of the Complaints Procedure. We aim to provide a quick and fair response to complaints and will ensure that a written response is given. At all stages your complaints will remain confidential.

Yours sincerely

Name of person inputting the complaint
Position of person inputting complaint
Agency

Enc

Appendix 3

COMPLAINT SATISFACTION SURVEY

In order to monitor our service to our customers we ask all persons who have made a complaint to answer a few questions. Please delete as appropriate, add any additional information and return in the prepaid envelope. Thank you for your time.

Log Number:

Did the response you received answer your complaint? Yes No

If no, please explain:

.....
.....
.....

Did staff understand your complaint? Yes No

If no, please explain:

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.....
.....

Were you kept informed of what was happening? Yes No

If no, please explain:

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.....

Are you receiving a good service now? Yes No

If no, please explain:

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.....
.....

Any further comments:

Thank you for drawing this matter to our attention. If you do not return this form within 2 weeks we shall assume that you were satisfied with the way in which we dealt with your complaint.