

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Stoll believes that all customers and stakeholders have the right to express their views on how our services are managed; Stoll accepts that this may sometimes come in the form of a complaint.
- 1.2. Stoll is committed to encouraging customers and stakeholders to come forward with any complaints about the services delivered in order to make sure that quality is maintained and enhanced and customers' needs are appropriately met.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Stoll defines a complaint as, an expression of dissatisfaction caused through our failure to achieve a specified level of service or address a particular issue for which we are responsible.
- 2.2. Complaints can relate to the quality of service or works; standard of accommodation; a product supplied by us; or the behaviour, actions or lack of action by Stoll, our staff or people working on our behalf.
- 2.3. Complaints can be both formal and informal:
 - A formal complaint is either a complaint that cannot be resolved quickly at point of contact, or one where the customer has requested a formal investigation and written response.
 - An informal complaint is a complaint that can be resolved quickly at first point of contact which means a written response is unnecessary.

3. Background

- 3.1. Listed below are the key regulatory standards and statutory Acts that have been acknowledged.
 - Homes & Communities Agency Regulatory Framework 2012
 - Localism Act 2011
 - Equality Act 2010
- 3.2. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential, including:
 - anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a customer or stakeholder
 - sensitive organisational information

Officers will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information with the consent of the resident concerned, unless:

- Stoll is required to by law
- the information is necessary for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

4. Policy

4.1. The objectives of this policy are to:

- resolve complaints quickly and sensitively
- resolve complaints at the first point of contact where ever possible
- manage all complaints in an open and accountable way; keeping the complainant fully informed throughout the process
- use complaints to help us improve our services and reduce the level of complaints in the future

5. Implementation

5.1. To achieve the policy objectives, Stoll will:

- ensure that all customers and stakeholders know how to complain
- make personal contact with complainants, ideally face to face or by telephone, to understand their complaint, attempt resolution and update them
- acknowledge all complaints in writing within 2 working days
- respond to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days. Where this is not practically possible, we will give reasons and agree new timescales with the complainant
- review and respond to Stage 2 complaints within 5 working days following receipt of the escalation request or agree new timetables where further investigation is required
- support vulnerable customers through the complaints process and, where appropriate, refer them to alternative services that may be able to assist
- help access independent advocacy where the complainant lacks capacity to make the complaint or take part in the investigation and outcome
- provide alternative avenues to seek support when the service requested is outside Stoll's remit where appropriate and where possible
- maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information at all times

5.2. If the complaint covers allegations of discrimination or abuse then the Harassment, Anti-social Behaviour and Safeguarding policies should be referred to.

5.3. If the complaint covers discrimination then the Equality and Diversity Policy should also be referred to.

6. Equality and diversity

6.1. Stoll is committed to giving our customers, staff and stakeholders the information they need in ways they can understand. It is our intention to produce clear written documents so that they can be understood by as many people as possible. We expect staff to be sensitive to the needs of residents who cannot read, this includes having an awareness of the issues surrounding both illiteracy and dyslexia.

6.2. In the implementation of this policy Stoll will ensure that no-one is treated unfairly on the grounds of race, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief.

7. Monitoring

7.1. Gathering feedback from our customers on their experience of our services is important. We use this feedback to improve the service we provide. All complaints received are reported to the Corporate Services Team who monitor the progress and outcomes of the complaints and report to the Senior Management Team at their monthly meetings, where lessons learned can be disseminated through the teams.

8. Policy Review Form

8.1. The form below is designed to ensure that all of Stoll's policies remain 'live' and also conforms to the high levels expected of Stoll around areas such as equal opportunities, user involvement and continuous improvement.

8.2. The lead on each policy should retain this form and keep it updated continuously in order to feed into the ongoing review process of all policies. When presenting a new or existing policy for sign off by the SMT or the Trustee Board the completed policy review form must be presented.

<u>Policy:</u>	<u>Complaints Policy</u>
Date of last review:	Date: January 2016
Date of next review:	Date: January 2018
Approval by residents obtained on:	Date: October 2016
Beneficiaries' comments feeding into review:	Communication is key to responding to complaints. Clear information widely communicated to tenants on how to make a complaint. Triggers added to form to assist in completion Independent person to monitor that complaints are being dealt with properly
Approval by partners obtained on:	N/A
Approved by SMT on:	Date: January 2016
Staff comments feeding into review:	Staff need to manage expectations and keep complainant fully updated on the process
Approval by Trustee Sub-committee on:	Date: November 2016