



## **Langstane Housing Association**

### **Langstane Housing Support Service Complaints Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

Langstane Housing Association is a Co-operative and Community Benefit Society, and a registered social landlord with charitable status.

The Langstane Group (Langstane) consists of Langstane Housing Association Limited and its wholly owned subsidiaries.

The Langstane Group has its own Complaints Policy, however, Langstane Housing Support Service is registered with the Care Inspectorate and because of this it is important that the service has a Complaints Policy tailored in particular to service users.

Each service user will be given a copy of the complaints policy. All service users will also be issued with a copy of the Health and Social Care Standards. These standards outline how a service user should be treated by the service. The standards include information on how a service user can ensure their voice is heard and guidance on how to make a complaint. Standard 4 of the Health and Social Care Standards requires that service users know how, and can be helped, to make a complaint to both the housing support service and the Care Inspectorate. If a service user has a complaint this will be discussed with them and acted on without negative consequences. It is also important that service users are aware that complaints can be made in a number of formats, and that the service user making the complaint can choose to do so anonymously if they so wish.

## 2. Aims and objectives of the policy

The aims and objectives of this policy are to ensure:

- 2.1 The Langstane Housing Support Service offer a high quality service and person centred support with a focus on outcomes for the service user.
- 2.2 The Langstane Housing Support Service places service users at the centre of any advice or support actioned on their behalf.
- 2.3 The housing support staff treat every service user with respect and dignity at all times. However, there might be occasions where things go wrong and a service user will want to make a complaint.

Complaints are welcome and form a vital element in service development and supporting vulnerable service users. It is important for any social service to listen to a complaint, investigate appropriately, apologise where the service has failed to deliver the standard expected – and to use this information to improve the quality and effectiveness of the service for other service users.

## 3. Links to other strategic documents and policies

The Langstane Housing Support Service Complaints Policy is linked to a number of strategic documents and policies in particular but not solely:

- Supporting and Protecting Adults from Abuse and Harm Policy
- Privacy Policy

- Child Protection Policy
- Unacceptable Actions Policy
- Customer Care Policy
- Equality and Diversity Strategy and Policy
- Tenancy Sustainment Strategy

## 4. Policy

### 4.1 Who can use the complaints service?

Any service user in receipt of housing support from the Langstane Housing Support Service can make a complaint at any time if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received. Service users are tenants of the Langstane Group.

### 4.2 What types of issues can cause complaints?

Complaints may be made about any aspect of the service which has caused a problem or upset. Such issues may include:

- The time a service user has waited to see a Support Worker
- The quality of the service delivered by the Support Worker
- Failings by the Support Worker to complete tasks undertaken on behalf of a service user
- Service users not receiving information from a support worker that they have requested
- Support staff behaving unprofessionally towards a service user

All information about service users is treated confidentially and stored securely. The Langstane Housing Support Service staff is bound by the Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers which describe standards of professional conduct and practice required of staff as they go about their daily work.

Confidentiality is an important aspect of the Codes of Practice therefore Langstane Housing Support Service staff will not discuss service user case-notes with any other user of the service. General complaints not made by a service user will be dealt with under Langstane Housing Association's complaints policy.

### 4.3 How do service users complain?

The Langstane Housing Support Service treats all complaints seriously. Complaints can be made by using the following methods of contact:

- In person
- In writing
- By telephone,
- Electronically by email

The aim is to resolve complaints quickly and to the satisfaction of all parties involved. By focusing on the investigation and quick resolution it should prevent a complaint from escalating further. In some situations, the service user making a complaint may

wish to contact the Care Inspectorate in the first instance. The Care Inspectorate's contact details are listed below under the third stage of the Complaint's Process.

It is important to note that complaints made by letter, over the telephone, by email or made in person all have the option to be dealt with confidentially if the service user wishes to protect their own identity.

#### **4.4 Complaint Process 1<sup>st</sup> Stage**

If the service user wishes to make a complaint about the service, they should discuss this with their Housing Support Worker initially to try and resolve the issue. If the service user feels unable to discuss the complaint with their Housing Support Worker or does not feel the complaint has been resolved they can contact the Langstane Housing Support Service Team Leader who is the registered manager of the Langstane Housing Support Service. The project will work with the service user to resolve the issue within 5 working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the project cannot resolve the complaint within this timescale the service user will be informed of the reason and the length of extension required.

#### **4.5 Complaints Process 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage**

If the service user is unhappy with the outcome at stage 1 or the complaint was not resolved due to complexity and requiring detailed investigation the complaint will move to stage 2 of the complaints procedure. Stage 2 of the complaint will be dealt with by the Team Leader of the Langstane Housing Support Service.

The Team Leader will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 3 working days. The Team Leader may make contact with the service user to get more details of the complaint or why they remain dissatisfied. A full response to the complaint will be provided to the service user as soon as possible and within 20 working days. If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days the service user is informed. Time limits are agreed with the service user and the service user will be kept up to date with progress.

Service Users can contact Langstane Housing Support Service Team Leader at Langstane Housing Association, 680 King Street, Aberdeen, AB24 1SL. Tel 01224 423000 or email [helen.gordon@langstane-ha.co.uk](mailto:helen.gordon@langstane-ha.co.uk)

#### **4.6 Complaints Process 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage**

If the service user is unsatisfied with the response received the service user can complain to the Care Inspectorate. The Langstane Housing Support is registered with the Care Inspectorate. The Care Inspectorate regularly inspects registered services to ensure they meet the needs of service users. The Care Inspectorate also deals with serious complaints which have not been resolved at earlier stages of the complaint process.

The Care Inspectorate has the power to make recommendations about a social service or in extreme situations close down a service. The Care Inspectorate is based at 48 Huntly Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1SH, tel 0345 600 9527.

## **5 Roles and responsibilities**

Overall responsibility for the Langstane Housing Support Service Complaints Policy lies with the Director of Housing. The Team Leader is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy. The Team Leader will delegate responsibilities outlined in the policy and where appropriate to the rest of Housing Support Service team.

## **6 Monitoring and review**

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years unless legislative changes or guidance requires an earlier review.

## **7 Equality and diversity**

The Langstane Group is committed to promoting equality and diversity across all areas of work. Discrimination or harassment of any kind is not tolerated.

If you would like this document in large print, please contact Support Services on 01224 423000.