

Southern Oaks Complaints Policy & Procedure

Policy Ref:	SO – C001
Owner:	Complaints Officer
Amended for ASO use	DBO

Effective date:	October 2019
Next review date:	October 2025
Updated:	February 2025

Do you have a Concern or a Complaint?

Complaints Policy and Procedure for Southern Oaks

1. Definition of a Concern or Complaint	<p>An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation. Its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals.</p> <p>It is our policy to resolve all issues/concerns/complaints as quickly as possible. We treat each on a case-by-case basis. If we feel that your complaint is not justified, it is our policy to work with you to make sure your concern or dissatisfaction is fully resolved.</p>
2. Definition of a Service Request	<p>A request from a resident to their landlord to take action to fix a problem.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with how we have tried to resolve your Service request, please use the process to make a complaint listed below.</p> <p>Please note that we treat each request individually and we do not discriminate between a Service Request, Concern, or Complaint choosing to use the same robust process to reach a mutually agreed resolution with everyone.</p>
3. Exclusions to the complaint process	<p>SO feel that the items below are acceptable exclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago. · Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court. · Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
4. If you have a Service Request or wish to let us know that you have a Concern or Complaint, this is how you should let us know	<p>We are committed to providing you with an excellent service. We understand, however, that sometimes the service we provide may not meet your expectations. If this is the case, we want to know about it.</p> <p>Remember that sometimes things go wrong, so don't be afraid to complain. Please be aware that we keep all complaints confidential.</p> <p>We welcome your suggestions and comments, together with those from your relatives and friends, or organisations such as Age UK (AIMS) or Social Services departments, to help us to assess the services we provide.</p> <p>You can ask for support from your family, a friend, your representative or advocate throughout the process of raising a concern or complaint.</p> <p>If you have a concern about the services you receive from us, the first person to speak to is a staff member or the House Manager/Keeper. They will talk with you about your concern, make a note and try to sort it out immediately (or, if not, within five working days). In most cases this will sort the matter out quickly and satisfactorily. However, if you feel you can't raise your concern with them you can follow the procedure in this document (and also referred to in Schedule 5 of the Residents Tenancy Agreement) as amended from time to time.</p>



5. If you're not satisfied and you wish to make a Complaint	<p>There are three ways you can take the matter further.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You can put your complaint in writing and provide it to the Executive Leadership Team led by the Community Manager & the Senior House Manager (details and links below).2. You can ask a member of our staff or a volunteer to write down your complaint and give it to you for approval.3. You can then pass it on to the Community Manager or The Senior House Manager who will acknowledge your complaint, in writing, within 5 working days and respond within 10 working days. <p>If we need an extension of time for any reason we will meet with you, explain our reasoning and put this into writing. Also we note that as part of the Code any extension requires us to make sure that you have the details of the Ombudsman, which are noted in item 9 of this policy.</p> <p>The procedure then follows two stages.</p>
6. Stage 1: Investigation by The Executive Leadership Team (Senior House Manager or Community Manager)	<p>The Community Manager or The Senior House Manager will investigate your complaint and try to resolve it within ten working days. They will aim to send you a full written response to your complaint within 28 working days but will let you know if it is going to take longer. Please note that the staff member allocated to investigate your complaint will do so in a non-biased way, only offering the facts as laid out by their investigation.</p> <p>If you are not satisfied with the outcome, your concern/complaint it will be reviewed by The Complaints Officer (Director of Business and Operations).</p> <p>Please note that we will investigate your concern/complaint through to its conclusion. We will write to update you throughout this process.</p> <p>To avoid confusion our investigating team, follow the recommendations made within the Code and will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A - deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind.B - give the resident a fair chance to set out their position.C - take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and D - consider all relevant information and evidence carefully. <p>We will write to you at the completion of stage 1 letting you know where we are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. the complaint stageb. the complaint definition.c. the decision on the complaint.d. the reasons for any decisions made.e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right.f. details of any outstanding actions; andg. details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.



<p>7. Stage 2: Review by The Complaints Officer (Director of Business and Operations)</p>	<p>Please note that there will be a different person who leads each stage.</p> <p>The Director of Business and Operations will review your complaint and send you a full written response within 20 working days detailing the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the complaint stage. b. the complaint definition. c. the decision on the complaint. d. the reasons for any decisions made. e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right. f. details of any outstanding actions; and g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied. <p>We hope that by this stage you will be satisfied with how your complaint has been sorted out. However, if you are still not happy, please contact The Member Responsible for Complaints (Society Chairman) requesting an appeal. If not then you should apply point g above or item 8 & 9 below.</p>
<p>8. Appeal to the independent Housing Ombudsman</p>	<p>If you are still not satisfied with our response, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to investigate your complaint. The Ombudsman is an independent complaints ‘referee’ and the service is free.</p> <p>The Community Manager will be happy to give you more information about the Ombudsman service. The Ombudsman will investigate your complaint as long as you have already followed our complaints procedure.</p>
<p>9. Independent Housing Ombudsman</p>	<p>The Housing Ombudsman can be located and contacted using the details below:</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman Service 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN.</p> <p>Phone: 020 7421 3800 (or 0300 111 3000)</p> <p>Fax: 020 7831 1942</p> <p>E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk</p> <p>Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk</p>
<p>10. Supporting People</p>	<p>If you receive funding from Supporting People you can complain to the local Supporting People Team.</p>
<p>11. Legal proceedings</p>	<p>We cannot deal with a complaint if it raises issues that are already being dealt with by legal proceedings.</p>
<p>12. Payments</p>	<p>Compensation and goodwill payments. We may pay compensation or make a goodwill payment in certain circumstances if an investigation into a complaint confirms that we have failed to meet our responsibilities. Please ask for a copy of our compensation and goodwill payments policy for more information.</p>
<p>13. Other formats</p>	<p>If you would like this policy in another language or format, please speak to the Office Manager who will assist with this process.</p>
<p>14. Further information</p>	<p>If there is anything in this information you don’t understand or if you have any questions or comments about how the complaints procedure works, the House Manager will be happy to answer your questions.</p>



<p>15. How can we improve</p>	<p>We welcome your comments and suggestions about improving our complaints service. After we have looked at your complaint, we will write to you to find out whether you are happy with the way we have dealt with it.</p> <p>Please use the relevant links.</p>
<p>16. About The Southern Oaks Society/how we publicise and keep records</p>	<p>We are committed to providing the highest standards of support for older people. We welcome any comments or feedback you have which will help us improve our services for residents.</p> <p>We practice equal opportunities and are open to everyone, whatever their race, sex, sexuality, religious belief or ethnic origin.</p> <p>We publicise the complaints policy, our self-assessment, the residents survey and our self-assessment improvement plan on our website at the foot of page 1 under complaints.</p> <p>We keep a full record of your complaint within our secure data system. This information is confidential and can only be viewed by the Executive Team. We adopt all GDPR guidelines, and you will always be kept apprised if any information is updated.</p>
<p>17. The Complaints Officer (Director of Business and Operations) & The Executive Leadership Team (Community Manager & Senior House Manager)</p>	<p>Private and Confidential</p> <p>Director of Business and Operations and Community Manager can be located at Southern Oaks Nonsuch, Old Schools Lane, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1FL. They can be contacted on:</p> <p>Director of Business and Operations Email: martin.king@southern-oaks.org</p> <p>Community Manager Email: joanne.taylor@southern-oaks.org</p> <p>Senior House Manager Email: della.stewart@southern-oaks.org</p> <p>Each can be contacted by phone on: 0208 394 0050</p> <p><i>Your complaint will be dealt with in strictest confidence.</i></p>
<p>18. The Member Responsible for Complaints (Chairman of Southern Oaks Society)</p>	<p>Private and Confidential</p> <p>Southern Oaks Chairman is Nick Shore and he can be located at: Southern Oaks Nonsuch, Old Schools Lane, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1FL.</p> <p>He can be contacted on: nick.shore@southern-oaks.org</p> <p>He can be contacted by phone on: 0208 394 0050</p> <p><i>Your complaint will be dealt with in strictest confidence.</i></p>



19 - Residents Tenancy Agreement Schedule 5 refers:	The above procedure takes into consideration the Residents Tenancy Agreement under schedule 5.
20 - Complaints about non-Southern Oaks services	If you have a complaint about services you receive at home from any outside agency, you may be able to use that agency's own complaints procedure. The House Manager may be able to assist you with this. If you encounter issues, please contact the Community Manager on: 020 8350 0050
21 – Standard Objective	We have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties that reflects the need to: a. has a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments. b. takes collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and c. act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.



Your Complaint

Please fill in this form and provide it to our Senior House Manager or Community Manager at:

Southern Oaks Nonsuch, Old Schools Lane, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 1FL.

Name	
Address for reply	
Contact details	
Address of your home (if different from above)	

In the space below, it would be helpful if you were able to tell us about your concern. It would assist us greatly if you were able to mention as many details as possible. As a recommendation, you might want to follow this pathway:

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- Timeline of events that took place.
- Explain your concern and what in your opinion would be an acceptable outcome.

Please provide as much information as possible to help us consider all the facts and respond quickly.



If you would like us to send a copy of this form to someone else who may be able to help sort out your complaint, please fill in their details below.

Name	
Address for reply	
Contact details	
Your signature	
Date:	

Registered Office:
Southern Oaks Nonsuch
Old Schools Lane
Ewell
Surrey
KT17 1FL

Telephone
020 8394 0050

Registered Charity No:247308/ Regulator of Social Housing H1185/ Company No: 734705