

## UNIVERSITIES UK/GuildHE

### CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT HOUSING

#### Member Complaints Policy

##### **Our aim**

We are committed to providing a quality service for members, working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect, whilst ensuring that the legislative duties placed upon The Code are delivered in a consistent and timely manner.

##### **Scope**

This policy applies to member organisations of the UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code of Practice. The policy does not cover complaints by individual students in relation to their accommodation; the route for these complaints is well established through the respective institution's informal and formal processes, subsequently by referral to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) should no satisfactory resolution be achieved.

##### **Purpose**

An informal approach is appropriate when it can be achieved. But if concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed. The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly and consistently.

The Code's responsibility will be to:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing
- Respond within a stated period of time
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint
- Take action where appropriate

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Bring their complaint, in writing, to The Code's attention, no later than eight weeks of the issue arising
- Raise concerns promptly and directly with a member of staff at The Code
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date
- Allow The Code a reasonable time to deal with the matter
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond The Code's control

## Formal Complaints Procedure

### Stage one

- On receiving a complaint, National Code Administrator will try resolve the issue informally. Should the Code member not find this satisfactory, they may formally write to the Independent Chair of the UUK/Guild HE ACoP Sector Advisory Group (or their nominee through absence), detailing the reason for the complaint, the consequences to them as a result, and the remedy they are seeking
- Any complaint received will be acknowledged within four working days of receipt, a response and explanation will be received within 10 working days

### Stage two

- If the Code member is not satisfied with the response from the Independent Chair of the Sector Advisory Group, they can write to the Independent Chair of the UUK/Guild HE ACoP Governance Board (or their nominee through absence) and ask for the complaint and the response to be reviewed
- The Chair will acknowledge the request within five working days of receipt, a response will be received within 15 working days

### Final stage

- If the Code member is not satisfied with the subsequent reply from the Chair of the Governance Board, they may write to The Code's UUK/GuildHE Board member (or nominee through absence) within 10 working days. The letter can be sent to The Code contact email address and will be forwarded on. The letter should state why the Code member is dissatisfied with the outcome – please note there is likely to be an extended time for response
- The UUK/GuildHE board member will respond to inform the Code member of the action which will be taken to investigate the complaint, and when they can expect to hear the outcome of the investigation

**Any decision taken by UUK/GuildHE on an escalated complaint is final and there is no subsequent right of appeal**

### Definition of a complaint

The UUK/GuildHE Accommodation Code defines a complaint as 'any expression of dissatisfaction that is not resolved at initial contact and requires a further response'.

***It should be noted that at any stage during this process, should it be deemed appropriate due to the nature of the complaint, a sub-committee of Governance members (SAG/GB) will be formed to consider the particular matter***