

## **Dealing with Disputes/Complaints in Staff Accommodation**

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedure for dealing with complaints from staff tenants about noise or other un-neighbourly/anti social behaviour or with disputes between staff tenants. Such disputes/complaints are most likely to be about noise but may extend to such matters as shared cleaning of communal space, dual occupation of single rooms or behaviour of children.

The University has about 60 staff living in self contained and shared accommodation at Manor Park, Manor Farm and Blackwell Farm. The University, as landlord, grants assured tenancies normally fixed for 6 months to one year with a maximum of 2 years. These tenancies include a clause 'Tenants may not do anything which may be or may tend to be a nuisance or annoyance or cause damage to the Landlord or to any neighbouring or adjoining property or to the owners or occupiers of any neighbouring or adjoining property' and 'Tenants may not permit any guest or visitor of the tenant to be guilty of conduct which is a nuisance or annoyance to adjoining occupiers and neighbouring properties'.

As landlord the University expects tenants to comply with the conditions of their tenancy. Where tenants are suspected to be in breach of their tenancy this will normally be dealt with, in the first instance, by the Offsite Accommodation Manager. As far as practical this procedure should follow the standard University procedure for resolving complaints or grievances:

### **Stage 1**

If a member of staff has a dispute about a fellow flatmate or occupier of an adjacent self contained property it is preferable, in the first instance, this is taken up between the parties involved so that it can be resolved informally.

### **Stage 2**

If the dispute is not resolved the member of staff involved should make a complaint, preferably in writing, to the Offsite Accommodation Manager stating what the dispute or complaint is and what they wish to achieve.

The Offsite Accommodation Manager will investigate the complaint, consulting others as necessary and provide a written response, normally within ten working days, indicating what action will be taken.

If it is found that a resident member of staff is in breach of their tenancy the Offsite Accommodation Manager will normally meet with them. At the meeting the Offsite Accommodation Manager will outline the complaint and point out the requirements of the tenancy. The tenant will have the opportunity to state their side of the matter.

In the case of minor infringement of the tenancy requirements, for example excess noise, the normal sanction will be to write formally to the tenant stating that an infringement has occurred and asking them to comply with the tenancy requirements in future.

### **Stage 3**

If the dispute is not resolved the member of staff involved should make a complaint, preferably in writing, to the Director of Accommodation stating what the dispute or complaint is and why they are still dissatisfied.

The Director of Accommodation will investigate the complaint, consulting others as necessary and provide a written response, normally within ten working days, indicating what action will be taken.

In the case of more serious breaches of a tenancy or repeated minor breaches a decision may be made to terminate the tenancy. In this event The Director of Accommodation will consult with Human Resources and if necessary, the University Solicitors about the proposed termination.

### **Stage 4**

If the problem persists the complainant may write to the Director of Corporate Services. The written complaint should make clear, the grounds on which the complaint is being made, who has dealt with the complaint so far and the grounds for continued discontent.

The Director of Corporate Services will arrange for an investigation to be carried out consulting others as necessary. The Director of Corporate Services will ordinarily respond in writing to the complaint within 28 working days.

### **Stage 5**

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the resolution reached in Step 4, they will have exhausted the internal processes for pursuing a resolution to the complaint. Complainants have the right to raise the matter for external and independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Information on the process may be obtained directly from the OIA at: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.