



# Speak up Policy

## 1. Aim of policy

VIVID is a place where we act professionally and treat people fairly.

This policy makes sure you know who to talk to if you're worried about something and encourages you to speak up knowing you'll be listened to and protected.

All disclosures raised will be dealt with appropriately, consistently, fairly and professionally. This policy covers the way we treat our customers, how we behave towards each other and the way we do business with other organisations.

This policy applies to:

- all staff, board members, formally involved residents and volunteers by managing their conduct, behaviour and wellbeing; and
- our suppliers, contractors and partners

## 2. Policy

### When to speak up

The speak up policy, which you may recognise as whistleblowing, provides you a route to raise any concerns about irregularities in our business.

Please speak up if:

- you think we are failing in our duty to protect our customers and stakeholders particularly those who are most vulnerable;
- you are concerned for the wellbeing of a member of staff;
- you notice any weaknesses in our policies and procedures, or you don't think they're being followed;
- you think our suppliers, contractors and partners are falling short of our high standards.

### How to speak up

Whatever you're concerned about, please speak to your line manager first if you work for VIVID. If you don't feel able to speak to your manager, or you are not a member of staff, talk to Duncan Short our Group Resources Director. Duncan is our speak up contact and will listen to your concerns in confidence.

If you don't feel able to talk to any member of staff, Shena Winning, one of our independent board members, can be contacted. She's our confidential reporting board contact.

If you need to discuss your concerns with someone completely independent of VIVID, please speak to Neil Hewitson, our auditor from KPMG or a representative of a recognised union.

If you work for VIVID, you can also contact the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for independent advice.

Should our customers raise dissatisfaction about our services, these will be logged via our Complaints process in accordance with the requirements set out by Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

In some cases, complaints may need to be referred to alternative organisations for external review:

- Residential Leaseholder complaints to First Tier Tribunal (Property Chambers);
- Financial Services to the Financial Ombudsman Service;
- Home buyers to the NHBC, the Home Warranty Body.

On occasion we may receive information from other stakeholders which would appear to be a speak up issue but has not been raised as such or through the specified channels. In these instances, we will redirect and address the information through the most appropriate speak up channel.

If you want to place a report in writing, you can use the Speak up reporting form. This is only a guide to help you communicate and it's not necessary that you complete this form to have your concern recognised. It's helpful if you speak up as soon as you have a concern. We don't want you to gather evidence, investigate or try to put things right yourself.

We will acknowledge receipt of any disclosures by the end of the next working day.

### **What happens if you speak up?**

First of all, we'll listen to you to understand what your concern is.

We'll handle your report confidentially and aim to maintain confidentiality, to the best of our ability, within the constraints of completing a full investigation and undertaking actions to resolve the situation.

Reports will be stored securely and retained in line with our data retention schedule.

We will not tolerate any form of threat, retaliation or other action against anyone reporting an issue in good faith. Any such threats should be raised through the speak up reporting channels. This is really important because we want people to be able to speak up without worrying about any consequences.

We will provide appropriate support to you once you have made a disclosure.

Once you've spoken up leave it with us and we'll investigate and take whatever action is needed.

We may ask you further information as part of the investigation and we'll normally let you know the outcome but sometimes there'll be reasons why we can't.

We'll report speak up incidents to the Executive team, ARC or Board in accordance with the speak up procedure.

## **3. Responsibilities**

Speak up contacts will receive speak up reports and handle them appropriately as detailed in the speak up procedure. This procedure defines what the process is once a speak up report has been made.

Executive team will:

- have overall responsibility for this policy and take appropriate decisions on actions and reporting;
- review this policy on annual basis.

The Governance team will:

- facilitate the speak up process, reporting and monitoring of actions;
- arrange appropriate staff training.

Employees, board members and third parties will:

- read, understand and comply with this policy and associated documents;
- undertake mandated training (employees only);
- avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, a breach of this policy;
- co-operate fully with any investigation.

#### 4. Related Documents

Related policies, procedures and forms include:

- Speak up procedure
- Speak up reporting form
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Prevention of financial crime policy
- Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults policies
- Complaints policy

All of these documents can be found on our intranet and/ or internet.

#### Contact Information

Duncan Short - <i>Resources Director</i> ( <i>Speak up contact</i> )	<a href="mailto:Duncan.Short@vividhomes.co.uk">Duncan.Short@vividhomes.co.uk</a>	Mobile: 07753 449295
Shena Winning - Independent Board Member	<a href="mailto:Shena.Winning@btinternet.com">Shena.Winning@btinternet.com</a>	Mobile: 07770 875897
Neil Hewitson - KPMG Internal Auditor	<a href="mailto:Neil.Hewitson@kpmg.co.uk">Neil.Hewitson@kpmg.co.uk</a>	Mobile: 07810 404843
Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)	<a href="https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/home">https://healthassuredeap.co.uk/home</a>	

Consultation requirements	Last Consultation Date	Date for next consultation
n/a	n/a	n/a
Equality Impact Assessment required?	Last EIA date completed	
Yes	September 2023	

Author	Owner	Approved by	Date approved	Review date
Group Resources Director	Group Resources Director	Audit and Risk Committee	Sept - 2024	Sept - 2025

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