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#### 1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to admin staff and officers when dealing with drainage complaints.

#### 2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This guidance applies to drainage complaints relating to both domestic and commercial premises.

2.2 Drainage complaints are defined as;

- Blocked drains and sewers
- Water in cellars
- Sewage odours attributable to drains and sewers
- Defects to any other below ground drainage systems.

#### 3.0 POLICY

3.1 The policy of the Council is to respond to all drainage complaints. The scope of the response will be dependent on the nature of the complaint in particular the potential public health effect of the defect . Staff should refer to the flow chart contained within the guidance at all times.

3.2 If the effects of the defect to the sewer/drain are localised i.e. water in cellars, sewage discharging within a property's curtilage or sewage odours within the curtilage general advice will be provided in the form of a drainage advice leaflet.

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- 3.3 If the defect is causing sewage (not surface water) to discharge into an area open to public access i.e. public highway, car park, school yard, the request for service will be allocated to a case officer and a full investigation will be initiated.
- 3.4 At all stages both admin staff and case officers should take into account the needs of vulnerable persons when deciding the level of intervention required.

#### 4.0 GENERAL ADVICE FOR LOCALISED DEFECTS

- 4.1 The procedure contained in the flowchart will be followed.
- 4.2 If the effect of the drainage defect is localised i.e. water in cellar, sewage discharging within a property's curtilage or sewage odours within the curtilage Admin will advise the customer that;
- the responsibility to resolve the matter lies with the owners of the properties connected to the sewer above the defect or Yorkshire Water dependent on whether the sewer is private or public. Leeds City Council are not responsible for the upkeep or repair of sewers or drains, other than road gulleys which are the responsibility of the Highways Service.
  - a drainage advice leaflet and covering letter will be sent to the customer advising them how to identify if a sewer is private or public along with other information including how to unblock drains and sewers and contact numbers for Yorkshire Water .
- 4.3 Details will be entered onto Uniform. The IVA screen will be updated with the code DRAINAD and the case closed by admin. Covering letter BA84\_DRAIN\_01 and the Drainage Advice Leaflet will be sent to the complainant by first class post.
- 4.4 If after receiving a drainage advice leaflet the complainant contacts the Service and is unable to arrange the repair of a private sewer due to non cooperation of neighbours a new request for service should be opened by admin. The case will then be allocated to an officer for investigation as shown in para 5.0.

#### 5.0 SITE INVESTIGATIONS WHEN PUBLIC AREAS AFFECTED

- 5.1 On receipt of a request for service regarding sewage discharging onto a public area as described in para 3.3 the case will be allocated to an officer for investigation.

5.2 The officer should carry out an investigation in order to;

- Identify the location of the defect
- Identify if the sewer is private or public
- If public, advise Yorkshire Water
- If private, identify all owners affected
- Serve and enforce relevant notices
- Organise works in default as necessary including recovery of costs
- All actions should be in accordance with the Enforcement Policy ref. CEN G 1

## 6.0 DEFECTS TO NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- 6.1 Complaints relating to defects to other properties where sewage is discharging should be recorded by admin and referred to an officer for investigation as shown in para 5.0.
- 6.2 Defects to other properties where surface water only is discharging should only be recorded and referred to an officer for investigation if the defect has resulted in significant internal damp to the complainants property.
- 6.3 Surface water from blocked rainwater gulleys or leaking rainwater pipes and guttering running onto another persons land have no health implications and should not be taken as complaints. Customers should be advised that the issue is a civil matter between the parties concerned.

## 7.0 DEFECTS TO PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTIES

- 7.1 On receipt of a complaint from a tenant of a private rented property admin should advise the tenant that the maintenance and repair of the properties drainage system lies with the landlord or managing agent. The tenant should be advised to report the defect to their landlord or managing agent immediately. If the tenant has already reported the defect and no satisfactory remedial action has been taken the following actions are to be followed.
- 7.2 Complaints from tenants of private rented properties relating to defects where sewage is discharging should be recorded by admin and referred to an officer for investigation as shown in para. 5.0.
- 7.3 Complaints from tenants where surface water from leaking guttering or rainwater pipes and blocked surface water gulleys should only be recorded

and referred to an officer for investigation if the defect is causing significant internal damp to the property.

- 7.4 Complaints of leaking gutters or rainwater pipes and blocked surface water drains that are not causing significant internal damp have no health implications and should not be taken as complaints. Tenants should be advised that the issue is a civil matter between the tenant and landlord.
- 7.5 When investigating a complaint at a private rented property the investigating officer will assess the overall condition of the property and if necessary undertake a full inspection of the property with a view to taking action to bring the whole property up to the relevant standard.
- 7.6 When investigating a complaint at a private rented property the investigating officer will check if the landlord is a member of the Leeds Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Details of any investigation involving an accredited landlord should be referred to the Accreditation Scheme Coordinator.

## 8.0 UPDATING RECORDS AND RESPONSE TIMES

- 8.1 At all stages in the process the Uniform computer system should be updated in accordance with the work instructions WI/US/1 "Creating service requests", WI/US/2 "Updating requests and creating IVA", WI/US/6 "general conventions" and WI/US/11 "Enforcement".

## 9.0 RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

WI/US/1 – Creating Service Requests

WI/US/2 – Updating Requests and Creating IVA

WI/US/6 – General Conventions

WI/US/11 – Enforcement

CEN G 1 – EHS Enforcement Policy

# Appendix One

## Investigation of Drainage Complaints

