

Southside

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Group Anti-Bribery Policy

Issued: March 2016

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy describes how the Association (and our subsidiary SFARS Ltd) will safeguard against all forms of bribery. The Association values its reputation for ethical conduct and financial probity. Any allegation of bribery would be highly damaging to our image and reputation and will be dealt with robustly.
- 1.2 The Anti-Bribery Policy is complemented by other policies designed to safeguard against bribery, including:
- Our policies on Whistleblowing and Gifts and Hospitality;
 - Operational policies relating to housing applications and allocations, procurement and contracts management; and staff selection and recruitment.

2.0 Policy Statement

- 2.1 Southside Housing Association has zero tolerance of all forms of bribery and corruption. The Management Committee acknowledges its responsibility to provide leadership and has approved the following policy statement:

Southside Housing Association prohibits:

- Offering, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe, whether cash or another kind of inducement;

To or from

- Any person or company, whether they are a public official or body or private person or company;

By

Any employee, Committee member, agent or other person or body acting on our behalf;

In order to

Gain any commercial, contractual, financial or regulatory advantage for the Association in a way that is unethical;

Or in order to

Gain any personal advantage, monetary or otherwise, for the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

- 2.2 The Association will communicate this policy statement to all committee and staff members, and to agents, contractors or consultants providing services on our behalf.

3.0 The Bribery Act 2010: Meeting our Legal Obligations

- 3.1 The Bribery Act 2010 defines a bribe as ‘**a gift or reward given, offered or received to gain any business, commercial or personal advantage**’. The Act establishes several offences relating to bribery, including:

- Offering, promising, or giving a bribe (applicable to individuals and organisations)
- Asking for or receiving a bribe (also applicable to individuals and organisations)
- A corporate offence of failure to prevent bribery.

3.2 The corporate offence includes offences committed on behalf of an organisation by persons associated with it, for example agents or service providers. An organisation may have a full defense against the corporate offence, if it can show that it had adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery, based on 6 principles:

Bribery Act Principles	How Southside HA will address the Principles
1. Procedures should be proportionate to the organisation's size and activities	Our bribery risk assessment is based on our activities as a social landlord, rather than a generic bribery risk assessment.
2. There should be a top-level commitment within the organisation to prevent any form of bribery	Our Management Committee has approved this Policy. Our senior officer will be responsible for promoting compliance.
3. A risk assessment should be carried out	We have prepared a risk assessment in developing our Policy and we will review this periodically.
4. Due diligence should be undertaken in respect of agents or suppliers of services	We will obtain assurance about the financial and organisational status of agents and others as part of our procurement and appointment processes. We will issue this Policy to organisations working on our behalf, making clear that any kind of bribery will not be tolerated and will lead to termination of contracts.
5. Anti-bribery policies should be widely communicated	Our Policy will be communicated to all committee and staff members, and to agents, contractors and consultants.
6. Anti-bribery procedures should be monitored and reviewed	Our Audit Sub-Committee will be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Anti-Bribery Policy, and will report directly to the Management Committee.

4.0 Policy Implementation

Ethical Standards

4.1 The Association expects the highest standards of honesty and integrity from committee and staff members, our partners and contractors.

- 4.2 Rules relating to conduct and disciplinary action are set out in the Association's employment terms and conditions and in our codes of conduct for committee and staff.
- 4.3 The Association has adopted policies setting out the payments, benefits, gifts and hospitality that staff and committee members may properly receive. Staff and committee members should **exercise extreme caution** in accepting anything that is not expressly permitted by these policies or that has not been expressly approved by senior management or the Management Committee.

Financial and other controls

- 4.4 Staff and committee must comply with the Association's financial and other controls. These controls are subject to external and internal audit, and include:

- Scheme of Delegated Authority
- Financial Regulations and associated financial procedures
- Recording of all income and expenditure
- Policy on declarations of interests by all committee and staff members
- Policies/procedures for gifts, hospitality and donations; payments and benefits; and reimbursement of expenses
- Policies and procedures for repairs, maintenance and development procurement.

Information from agents, consultants and contractors

- 4.5 Appropriate company and financial information should be obtained in relation to prospective agents, consultants and contractors, in accordance with the Association's selection and appointment procedures (e.g. references, financial statements, accounts).
- 4.6 Agents, consultants and contractors should be provided with a copy of the Association's Anti-Bribery Policy. They should be advised in writing, a) of the need to comply with the Policy when acting on our behalf, and b) that any allegations of bribery will be subject to investigation and possible termination of contractual arrangements.

Reporting Concerns

- 4.7 Employees and committee members should report any suspicions of bribery to line managers, senior management or the Audit Committee, in confidence where necessary using the Policy on Whistleblowing. The following list gives examples of what to report:

- You are offered an unusually generous gift or lavish hospitality by a contractor or supplier;
- You are offered discounted fees for supply of goods or services to you as a private individual;
- You are offered a payment in cash or some other type of inducement if a contract is awarded to a particular contractor/supplier;
- A supplier asks you to provide an invoice or receipt when no money is payable or has been paid;
- Someone offers to pay you cash in return for receiving a house or other service that the Association provides, or for providing employment for a friend or relative;
- You notice that the Association has been invoiced for a payment that seems excessive in relation to the service / goods provided.

4.8 The Association will investigate fully any instances of alleged bribery and will assist the Police and other appropriate authorities in any resulting investigation. We will take firm action against any individual(s) involved in bribery, using our disciplinary procedures.

5.0 Risk Assessment

5.1 The Association's exposure to the risk of bribery is reduced by a number of factors:

- Our business is conducted 100% in the UK
- We are subject to – and comply with – statutory accounting standards, with all of our income and expenditure subject to external audit and public reporting
- We work in a highly regulated sector, and we have well-established and independently audited policies/procedures for committing expenditure and making payments
- We have an Audit Sub-Committee and an ongoing programme of internal audit.

5.2 Some parts of the Association's business have an inherently greater risk exposure due to the nature of the activities undertaken or services provided. These are:

- Letting of the houses we own and manage
- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Procurement risk – notably the appointment of professional consultants and contractors and organisational purchasing.

5.3 Our risk assessment describes these higher risk areas, the controls in place, and further action that is likely to be needed as a consequence of this Policy.

6.0 Policy Implementation and Monitoring

- 6.1 All committee and staff members are responsible for reading and understanding this Policy, and for contributing to its implementation. The Association's Director will have overall responsibility for ensuring this Policy is put into effect.
- 6.2 The Association will provide a copy of the Policy to all consultants and contractors who shall be responsible for operating in accordance with it when delivering services on behalf of the Association.
- 6.3 Implementation of the Policy will be monitored by the Audit Sub-Committee, as part of its remit for scrutiny of internal controls. The Audit Sub-Committee will be made aware of any breaches of the Policy and may recommend to the Management Committee any actions required, either in response to individual cases or in relation to the Policy as a whole.