

## Complaints Resolution and Compliments Policy

**Department:** Corporate Governance and Compliance

**Policy Owner:** Hilary Milne, Group Director of Governance and Compliance

**Author/prepared by:** Sandra Williams, Customer Engagement Manager (Insight)

**Approved by:** Customer Services Committee

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. This policy sets out One Housing Group Limited's ('One Housing') approach to receiving and handling concerns, complaints and compliments.
- 1.2. We are committed to proactively working with customers to resolve concerns and complaints in a consistent, fair, impartial and transparent way. We are keen to find ways of improving the service we provide. Both positive and negative feedback can help us understand what we can do differently to improve our service in the future.
- 1.3. We aim to deliver an excellent customer experience in line with our corporate plan vision and values which puts our customers at the centre of everything we do. If we fail to do this we will:
  - Apologise to you
  - Accept responsibility where we have failed
  - Put things right when they're in our control
  - Listen to your concerns and take effective action to prevent re-occurrence and learn from outcomes
- 1.4. This policy outlines how we will resolve your concern or complaint, and if you are not happy with our decision, how you can escalate the matter further.

## 2. Aims and Definitions

2.1. Our customers should expect to receive the best customer experience from us. When things go wrong we will:

- Facilitate the timely, effective and early resolution of all concerns\* and formal complaints
- Work collaboratively internally, with partner organisations and other external agencies to coordinate comprehensive and robust resolutions to complaints
- Use the analysis of all complaints data to help One Housing improve services and reduce the level of concerns and complaints
- Be accountable in our handling and management of complaints.

A **concern** is an issue that you raise with us that we endeavour to resolve very quickly. A formal **complaint** is where we fail to resolve your concern informally and is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service received or a service failure by us. A **compliment** is an expression of praise, encouragement or gratitude for a positive experience.

*\*Concerns are "informal initial complaints"*

## 3. Policy Principles

- 3.1. Initial concerns will be resolved by our Resolutions Team within 3 working days unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case a formal complaint will be recorded. Further information can be found in section 5.
- 3.2. We will work with you in the resolution of any formal complaint and respond within 15 working days.
- 3.3. You should complain as soon as possible and within a reasonable timescale which would normally be 6 months of the issue happening so that we can resolve it promptly.
- 3.4. Anyone with a legal or contractual relationship with us can make a complaint about the services they receive from us or anyone working for us (e.g. contractors).
- 3.5. We may treat multiple complaints by the same customer as a single complaint dependent upon the nature of the concerns raised. We will let you know if this is the case.
- 3.6. Anonymous complaints will be passed to a senior manager responsible for the day-to-day service for investigation.
- 3.7. We will seek to identify customers who are vulnerable and account for their specific needs when handling their complaint by making appropriate and reasonable adjustments.
- 3.8. Where our staff have provided you with excellent service we are keen to hear about it. Any compliments we receive will be passed to the team in question, and where you provide positive feedback about individual members of staff this may be included in our staff recognition scheme.

## 4. Scope

- 4.1. In this policy, unless otherwise stated, the term 'customer' is used to embrace residents (whether owners or renters) and service users.
- 4.2. If you prefer, you can authorise someone else to raise a concern on your behalf i.e. an 'advocate'. This could be a friend/relative or a representative from an external organisation (such as Citizens Advice Bureau). If you authorise an advocate to act on your behalf, you must inform us in writing. If your chosen advocate is by profession or training a solicitor, they can advocate on your behalf but not in a legal capacity as our complaints process is not a legal process.
- 4.3. This policy does not cover:
  - Legal action – if we are taking legal action against you, you must use the legal process to challenge our decision
  - Subtenants of a leaseholder must direct their complaint to their contracted landlord or third party managing agent and utilise their complaints procedure
  - Complaints from individuals who are not customers will be acted on but are not covered by this policy
  - Services for which One Housing are not responsible e.g. local authority decisions about housing benefit or nominations, should be raised with the local authority. We will endeavour to sign-post you to the most appropriate body

- Crimes such as theft or damage to personal property in an individual's home or left in communal areas (for example car park or bike stores)
- Commercial decisions e.g. a decision to sell our homes
- Complaints relating to parking tickets and enforcement, should be raised through the relevant agency's complaints handling process
- Complaints of anti-social behaviour as these are covered by One Housing's Community Safety policy, but a complaint will be accepted if a customer is dissatisfied with how their case was handled once it has been concluded
- Complaints relating to serious incidents or safeguarding concerns will be investigated in accordance with the Incident Management or Safeguarding policies.
- Complaints about rent increases or the level of service charges or its reasonableness. Please refer to our Rents & Service Charge policy. We will accept complaints if we fail to follow the processes associated with the management of services charges.
- Defects in new build homes – these should be reported to our appointed agents or our Aftercare team. Details can be found in the Home User Guide or customers can call 0300 123 9966 for further information. Complaints will be accepted if failures are identified in our handling of this process.
- Insurance claims – our Insurance team will review any claims made against us. These should be directed to [insurance@onehousinggroup.co.uk](mailto:insurance@onehousinggroup.co.uk).

## 5. Our Resolution Process

- 5.1. When you first let us know you are unhappy about a service your concern will be forwarded to our Resolutions Team to review. A member of our Resolutions Team (a Resolutions Officer) will contact you to discuss your concerns and work with you to agree a satisfactory outcome; we aim to do this within 3 working days.
- 5.2. If, following this, you are still unhappy and/or we are unable to resolve your concerns, the Resolution Officer will forward these to our Corporate Complaints & Insight Team, who will now treat the concern as a formal complaint.
- 5.3. The Corporate Complaints team will appoint a lead officer to work with you to investigate and endeavour to resolve your complaint. The complaint will be acknowledged within 2 working days. The lead officer will provide you with a written response within 15 working days outlining the outcome of their investigation and any action(s) agreed with you to resolve your complaint, or if actions cannot be agreed, our final decision on the matter. If we need more time to investigate your complaint (for example, if it is particularly complex) we will contact you to explain and agree a new response time. We will always provide you with a response within 30 calendar days, unless we have previously agreed a later deadline.
- 5.4. If the lead investigating officer requires any additional information they may contact you or seek to make arrangements to meet with you to discuss the matter further.
- 5.5. The lead officer's letter will make it clear that this represents our 'final decision' and marks the end of our internal complaints process. The letter will explain how

you can raise the matter with a designated person and/or Ombudsman if you remain unhappy with our response. We will close complaints once we have sent you our response.

- 5.6. We will try everything to investigate your complaint.; however, should you decide not to engage with us to resolve your complaint in line with our complaints process, we may have to close your complaint.

## If you remain unhappy with our final decision

- 5.7. We will work very hard with you to achieve a satisfactory resolution to your complaint. If, however you disagree with our final decision you may contact any of the following and ask them to look at your complaint:

- A **Member of Parliament (MP), Local Councillor or Designated Tenant Panel** where one exists (each of these is known as a 'Designated Person'). You can involve an MP or Councillor at any point in pursuing your complaint; however, they do not take up their formal designated role until you have exhausted our formal complaints process. You can contact your MP or Local Councillor at <https://www.writetothem.com>

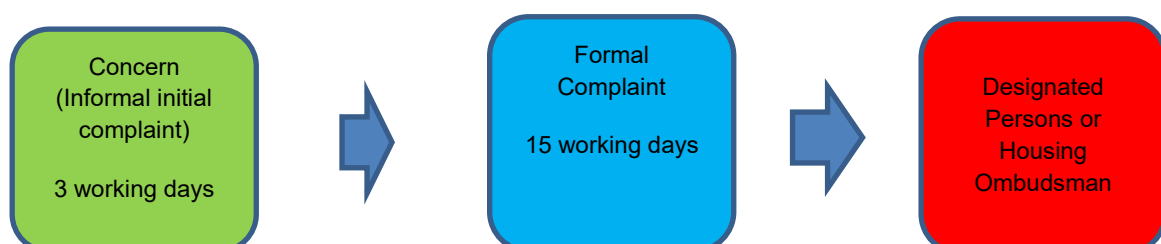
- The **Housing Ombudsman Service**. You can wait the statutory 8 weeks from the date of our final decision and then refer your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Once the Housing Ombudsman has reviewed the complaint, their decision is final. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk> or 0300 111 3000

- Complaints about care services should be referred to the **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO)** at <https://www.lgo.org.uk> or 0300 061 0614. Such complaints may also be referred to the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)**, but the Commission does not deal with complaints from customers directly; it simply takes these into account in its planning programme. You can contact the Care Quality Commission at <https://www.cqc.org.uk> or 03000 616 161

- Where we are providing services on behalf of a **local authority**, customers can also complain to their local authority, this will apply to: customers in temporary or supported housing and customers in receipt of services such as floating support. Find your local authority <https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>.

We respect the rights of our customers to complain to these statutory bodies and we will work openly with partner agencies to resolve any legitimate concerns that our customers raise. We will co-operate fully with the relevant Ombudsman Service during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting decisions, which will be binding on us.

## Resolution Process Map



## Petitions and Group Complaints

- 5.8. We treat complaints received through petitions the same way as we manage group complaints and in line with the process detailed above. In terms of handling the complaint efficiently, we will ask the group to nominate a single point of contact and we will work with this person to resolve complaint.

## Persistent or Unreasonable Behaviour

- 5.9. We will not discriminate against anyone who makes a complaint. If a complainant or their representative behaves inappropriately in making a complaint we will seek to manage that behaviour as necessary, while treating the complaint like any other. Examples of inappropriate behaviour might include:

- Refusing to accept the decision or repeatedly arguing points with no new evidence
- Making complaints intentionally to cause harassment, divert resources or to disrupt the proper workings of One Housing
- Being abusive or threatening to staff
- Insisting on complaints being managed in ways that are not compatible with our policy or procedures
- Refusing to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of our complaints procedure
- Changing the basis of the complaint during the course of the investigation without sufficient reason
- Submitting repeat complaints with only minor differences and insisting they are new complaints
- Making excessive and disproportionate demands on staff time and resources (e.g. lengthy phone calls, emails to numerous staff, detailed letters every few days or expecting immediate responses)

In these cases, while focussing on, and seeking to resolve the substance of any complaint, we will manage the behaviour in line with our **Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy**.

## 6. Learning and Continuous Improvement

6.1. In line with the principles of dispute resolution recommended by the Housing Ombudsman Service, One Housing seeks continuous improvement through analysing the themes and trends and using feedback and lessons learnt from concerns, complaints and compliments to improve service design and delivery. Continuous improvement focuses on increasing both the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation to fulfil its corporate plan objectives, in this case in relation to customer service.

6.2. All feedback is monitored and extensively reported on to the Senior Leadership team, Executive, Customer Services Committee (and through them our Group Board) as well as our Resident Panels on a regular basis.

6.3. Our approach to continuous improvement is underpinned by the adoption of best practice, regular improvement reviews, evaluation and monitoring of the organisation activities to establish areas for development. Feedback from our customers is a key element of continuous improvement.

## 7. Equality and Diversity Statement

7.1. One Housing is committed to valuing and promoting Equality and Diversity. We're working hard to create a culture that celebrates and welcomes individuality, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religious or political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation or any other unfair distinction. We expect our staff to share these values and treat all our customers with fairness and respect. We will not treat customers who make complaints any differently from other customers.

## 8. Related Policies

- Compensation & Other Payments Policy
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- Rent & Service Charge Policy
- Community Safety Policy
- Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy

## 9. How to complain or give a compliment

<b>In writing</b>	<b>One Housing Atelier House 64 Pratt Street London NW1 0DL</b>
<b>By email</b>	<b>ask@onehousing.co.uk</b>
<b>By telephone</b>	<b>0300 123 9966</b>
<b>Via our website</b>	<b>www.onehousing.co.uk</b>