



Complaints and Compliments Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for our residents. We welcome feedback on our services, whether positive or negative. It gives us the opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services. We believe that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems and dissatisfaction.

2. Purpose

We aim to operate an open and accountable complaints system. This policy sets the steps for dealing with formal complaints so that we can respond consistently and well to service failures and that residents feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

A compliment is an unsolicited expression of gratitude or praise for a member of staff or service area.

The Policy will ensure that employees and residents are clear about the way in which we want to hear, respond to and address complaints as well as compliments which are made to us.

Misunderstandings can often be sorted out on an informal basis. We encourage all residents to contact relevant services to discuss the problem which they may be able to resolve straightaway. If the issue is unresolved residents can follow our complaints procedure.

3. Scope

This policy encompasses to all aspects of service delivery to residents and includes services provided by our contractors. However incidents of anti-social behaviour are not complaints and are subject to a separate policy.

4. Policy Principles

4.1 We aim to get things right first time and resolve service failures at the first point of contact where possible.

- 4.2 We are open to complaints and see them as an opportunity to improve our relationship with residents and to learn generally so that our services improve.
- 4.3 Respond to all recorded complaints within set timescales and ask residents to tell us about their complaint as soon as possible.
- 4.4 Accept complaints in person, letter, and email or via our website.
- 4.5 Complaints are managed through a process which has two stages. The procedure which guides this process is set out in the 'how to make a complaint' leaflet.
- 4.6 We distinguish between a report or a request for service and a complaint. For example, someone who tells us that their tap is not working or that they have a problem with noise from a neighbour is asking for a service. Someone who says we have failed to do a reported repair or to give proper help in dealing with a neighbour problem is making a complaint.
- 4.7 We will learn from our complaints by recording actions and decisions, by sharing information, by reporting on trends and by asking residents for feedback about their experience of our process.
- 4.8 We promote a positive culture about complaints to ensure that staff understand the policy and procedure and are appropriately trained and supported.
- 4.9 Whilst we want to be open to complaints about our service, we may – in very extreme cases – refuse to deal with complainants where the complaint is made in an aggressive or unreasonable manner or where the matter has already been fully considered at all stages of the procedure. Any such decision will be made by a senior manager and will be communicated in writing to the residents.
- 4.10 Residents can compliment a member of staff, a team or the organisation as a whole. Compliments are passed on to staff and their line manager, and are used to identify areas of good practice from which we all can learn.

5. The following are invalid complaints subjects

- 5.1 A first request for service, information or an explanation of our policies and procedures
- 5.2 Repairs that are either not completed or partially completed but still within published completion timescales.
- 5.3 Residents chasing non urgent repairs for the first time.
- 5.4 Reports of harassment (refer to Anti-Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination Policy & Procedure).

- 5.5 Reports of anti-social behaviour or neighbour disputes and related concerns of residents (refer to Anti-social Behaviour Policy & Procedure).
- 5.6 Requests for accommodation, mutual exchange or transfer applications.
- 5.7 A dispute against the amount of rent or service charge being charged
- 5.8 Complaints about staff while they are not at work or fulfilling a Spitalfields function (this could be an employment matter and dealt with as a disciplinary matter).
- 5.9. Issues where a resident has commenced legal action against us.
- 5.10 Appeals against policy decisions.
- 5.11 Vexatious complaints.

6. Responsibilities

There will be designated staff to cover the complaints process. Managers will ensure action is taken to comply with timescales. Overall responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the board and senior managers.

7. Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluation

There will be key performance indicators to report actions and progresses on complaints to the Board and Scrutiny Panel. This will be done on a quarterly basis. We will publish statistics annually.

8. Complaints Procedures

Our two stage complaints procedure comprises:

Stage 1

A complaint should be made via the [online complaints form](#), by email at admin@spitalfieldsha.co.uk, in person at our office at 78 Quaker St, E1 6SW or in writing. The complaint will be acknowledged within two working days, fully investigated by a member of the team not involved in the complaint and, unless exceptional circumstances prevail, a full written response will be sent to the complainant within 10 working days.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint to a Head of Service.

Stage 2

Review Stage – The complaint will be investigated by the Head of the relevant service (or the Chief Executive if the complaint involves the Head of Service).

The complaint should be provided in writing, summarising why the complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily. Alternative arrangements can be made where this is not reasonable.

The complaint will be acknowledged within two working days and the Head of Service will have under normal circumstances, up to 15 working days to complete their investigation. In some cases e.g. where the issue is complex or persons required for interview are not available, this may take longer and if so, the complainant will be informed of the delay and the anticipated timescale involved.

This is the final stage of the internal complaints procedure.

Taking matters further

If the complainant remains unhappy with the way we have handled their complaint, they can contact a 'designated person' – either a local Councilor or an MP – to consider their complaint.

If the designated person cannot resolve the complaint to the complainant's satisfaction, and either eight weeks have passed or the complaint has been referred by a designated person, the complainant can ask for their complaint to be determined by the Housing Ombudsman.

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