

Complaints and Compliments Policy & Procedure



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.

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 queries 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.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

Complaints can be resolved informally prior to engagement of formal complaints policy.

Scope

This policy encompasses 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.

Policy principles

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

We will respond to all recorded complaints from tenants within set timescales and ask residents to tell us about their complaint as soon as possible. Accept complaints in person, letter, and email or via our website.

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.

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.

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. We promote a positive culture about complaints to ensure that staff understand the policy and procedure and are appropriately trained and supported.

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 and communicated in writing to the residents.

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.

The following are invalid complaints subjects

- A first request for service, information or an explanation of our policies and procedures
- Repairs that are either not completed or partially completed but still within published completion timescales.
- Residents chasing non urgent repairs for the first time.
- Reports of harassment (refer to Anti-Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination Policy & Procedure).
- Reports of anti-social behaviour or neighbour disputes and related concerns of residents (refer to Anti-social Behaviour Policy & Procedure).
- Requests for accommodation, mutual exchange or transfer applications.
- A dispute against the amount of rent or service charge being charged
- 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).
- Issues where a resident has commenced legal action against us.
- Appeals against policy decisions.
- Vexatious complaints.

Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the customer service team.

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.

Complaints procedure

All complainants will be required to verify their identity and residence. Complainant will be requested to provide photo ID and proof of residence within the past three months from date of complaint. All anonymous complaints will not be logged nor responded. All complaints will be deemed as closed 14 days after response. 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 or in writing. The complaint will be fully investigated by a member of the team 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 stage 2.

Stage 2

Review Stage – The complaint will be investigated by the another relevant staff member.

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 under normal circumstances be investigated in up to 20 working days. 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 and either eight weeks have passed, the complainant can ask for their complaint to be determined by the Housing Ombudsman.

Link to [Self- assessment](#)

Policy approved on 21 July 2021