

Complaints Policy

Date: 28th March 2024



Policy Name	Complaints Policy
Version	1
Date of Policy	March 2024
Next Review	March 2026
Purpose	<p>Residents are central to everything we do. We are committed to using feedback from all customers to improve our processes and actions. We do everything we can to ensure that our service meets expectations at the first interaction. However, we know that from time to time we may fall short of this, and things do go wrong. When things do go wrong, we will prioritise working with the customer to put things right as quickly and fairly as possible. We will ensure we communicate effectively with the customer throughout the process.</p> <p>As an organisation we will embrace complaints as a positive way of maintaining trust and strong relationships with our customers. We will ensure that we have effective procedures, well trained staff and a positive complaints culture that enables our policies and procedures to have the most positive impact on the way we conduct our day-to-day operations and relationships with all our stakeholders.</p>

Definitions	
Service Request	A service request is a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right.
Complaint	A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

Legislation	
Regulator of Social Housing	We are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing. They set out a regulatory framework which includes the regulatory standards that providers must meet. The Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard outlines regulatory standards for complaints handling.
Housing Ombudsman	<p>We will provide details for the Housing Ombudsman in all correspondence relating to complaints. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice and information at any point during the complaints process.</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman PO Box 152 Liverpool L33 7WQ www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk</p>
Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code	<p>This policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code. In complying with this we will self-assess our Policies and Procedures against the Code annually. At the end of June each year we will produce an Annual complaints performance and service improvement report. This will be presented at our Board Meeting and will also be published on our website. www.hellensresidential.co.uk</p>

The Complaints Process	
Who Can Make a Complaint	<p>We will accept complaints from:</p> <p>Any of our existing customers receiving services from us</p> <p>Former tenants (within 12 months)</p> <p>Purchasers of sales homes (within 6 months)</p> <p>Anyone who has applied for housing with us.</p> <p>With a customer's consent we will accept complaints on their behalf from:</p> <p>A formal representative of the above such as MP, Citizens Advice Bureau</p> <p>Advocates such as a social worker</p> <p>Third parties acting as a representative or a family member</p>
How to Make a Complaint	<p>Residents can raise a complaint in any way with any member of staff. All staff are trained in our Complaints Procedure.</p> <p>In person: With any member of our team</p> <p>Via you Hellens Hub account</p> <p>By Telephone: 0191 594 6666</p> <p>By Email: info@hellensresidential.co.uk</p> <p>By website: www.hellensresidential.co.uk</p> <p>By Post: Teal House, 10 Teal Farm Way, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 8BG</p> <p>Please note that we do not have the facility to accept complaints via our Out of Hours emergency response line.</p>
Complaint Handling	<p>When we receive a complaint and at every stage of the complaint we will provide clear guidance. We will keep a full record of the complaint, our response and correspondence with customers.</p>
Responding:	
Stage One	<p>This is the receipt of an initial complaint.</p> <p>We will acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days.</p> <p>We will aim to resolve all complaints within 10 working days.</p> <p>We will contact customers to listen to their complaint and the details around it. We will discuss the complaint and the outcome that the customer is seeking.</p> <p>If the complaint is complex and the 10 days is not achievable, we will contact the customer to agree a revised timescale.</p> <p>In the case of a complex case, we will keep the customer updated at least once a week as to the progress of the investigation.</p> <p>If the customer is unhappy for us to extend the complaint, then we will close the complaint and provide our findings thus far.</p> <p>We will confirm in writing the outcome of the complaints process.</p> <p>We will provide details of next steps should the customer feel that the response has not resolved the complaint.</p>
Stage One Complaints Response	<p>The response will include the following:</p> <p>The complaint stages</p> <p>The complaint definition</p> <p>The decision on the complaint</p> <p>The reasons for any decisions made</p> <p>The details of any remedy offered to put things right</p> <p>Details of any outstanding actions and timescales for their completion</p> <p>Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2</p> <p>The right to seek advice from the Housing Ombudsman and their contact details.</p>

<p>Stage Two</p>	<p>We expect most complaints to be resolved at Stage One. However, if the customer is not satisfied then they are able to escalate the matter to Stage Two. This is a process whereby the initial complaint will be reviewed by another member of staff. A request for this escalation must be made within 10 days of receipt of the Stage 1 response. Any request after this date will be considered on its merits. We will acknowledge the escalation within 2 working days. We will contact the customer to listen and understand the outstanding issues. All Stage 2 responses are approved by a Director. We aim to provide a full response within 10 working days. If the complaint is complex and the 10 days is not achievable, we will contact the customer to agree a revised timescale. In the case of a complex case, we will keep the customer updated at least once a week as to the progress of the investigation. If the customer is unhappy for us to extend the timescales, then we will provide the customer with the Housing Ombudsman details. We will confirm in writing the outcome of the review.</p>
<p>Stage Two Review Response</p>	<p>The response will include the following: The complaint stages The complaint definition Outcome of investigation The reasons for any decisions made including policy, law and good practice The details of any remedy offered to put things right Details of any outstanding outcomes and timescales for their completion This will be our final response. The right to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman if still dissatisfied and their contact details.</p>

<p>Exclusions</p>	
<p>We will have a first response to always accept a complaint. However, there are some instances where we will not accept a complaint: When the incident occurred over 12 months from the date the complaint is made (unless health & safety or safeguarding issue) When repeated complaints are made about the same or a related matter which has already been through our full complaints process Where legal action / proceedings are already underway against Hellens Residential (The Claim form / particulars of claim has been filed at court) When the complaint is referring to breaches of tenancy such as anti-social behaviour. The complaint can only be about the handling of the situation. On the rare occasions where complaints that are made are deemed as vexatious. Please refer to our Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy for further information. If we exclude a complaint, we will set out our reasons in writing and provide details for the Housing Ombudsman.</p>	
<p>What you can Expect from Hellens Residential</p>	
<p>We will believe the customer at first point of contact We aim to resolve any issues at first point of contact We will ask what remedy the customer is seeking at first point of contact We ensure that whoever receives the complaint follows it through to the end of the process or handover to a person who can, keeping the customer informed of the handover We communicate and update customers as appropriate to that individual customer We will use the learning from complaints to improve our services</p>	

