



## TUNTUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Policy name:	Complaints Policy
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Customer facing:	Yes

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 We recognise that, on occasion, we may fail to meet the standards that we set, and when this happens, this policy sets out how we will act when we receive a complaint.
- 1.2 This policy sets out Tuntum Housing Association's approach to dealing with complaints.

### 2. Policy statement and aims

- 2.1 We are committed to providing excellent services that meet the standards agreed upon with our residents.
- 2.2 We aim to resolve matters effectively at the earliest opportunity by putting things right when they have gone wrong. We do this by using clear communication, being polite and responding in a timely manner.
- 2.3 We deal with all complaints fairly, being transparent in our approach.
- 2.4 We are open and accountable, taking ownership of the matter and focussing on reaching a fair outcome.
- 2.5 We welcome complaints and seek to improve the service we offer by learning from the experiences of our residents. We regularly review the root cause of complaints and, where possible, implement changes to prevent repeat occurrences.
- 2.6 We report what we learned from complaints on our website, resident newsletter, and annual report.
- 2.7 We will make this policy available to our residents upon request. We will publicise the policy and how to make a complaint on our website and within our newsletter.

### 3. Legislation or regulatory requirements

- 3.1 The laws and regulations that apply to this policy are:
- Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996 and 2004
  - Localism Act 2011
  - Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard 2017
  - Data Protection Act 2018
  - The Regulator of Social Housing
  - General Data Protection Regulation
  - Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code 2024
  - The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023



3.2 We are a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), meaning a resident can seek their advice and guidance during their complaint. They will work with us to resolve the complaint; in some cases, they may decide to complete an investigation. Details about how to contact the HOS can be found on our website.

#### 4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to current tenants, licensees and leaseholders, including named household members. It also applies to former tenants, licensees and leaseholders, including named household members who are raising a complaint about an incident that occurred no later than 12 months prior to the ending of their relationship with us. We will accept complaints referred to us within 12 months of the issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue.

4.2 Residents have the right to request that a third party or representative raise a complaint on their behalf. In these circumstances, we will require evidence of consent for us to respond to a third party or representative.

5. **Definition:** 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.

5.1 Our residents do not need to use the word 'complaint' for us to treat their concerns as a complaint under this policy. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction we will offer them the opportunity to make a formal complaint.

5.2 We can receive complaints via telephone, email, in writing, via our website and social media. We can accommodate a meeting in person at our offices for concerns to be logged but would follow up with communication via telephone or in a written format.

5.3 Complaints made via social media will be responded to publicly with a request to move to a private message to maintain confidentiality and privacy.

5.4 We provide information on how to make a complaint to all tenants who complete a survey for us. Expressions of dissatisfaction entered in a survey are not defined as complaints but need to be raised separately. We will provide our contact details so that they can log a complaint.

5.5 Complaints that are covered by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to provide a service.
- Failure to meet the standards that we set in our policies and agreements.
- Attitude or behaviour of a member of staff.

5.6 **Exclusions:** We will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint, However, there are some circumstances where we will not accept a complaint or escalation, though we may decide to investigate the matter internally to ensure we continue to provide the best possible service. Such circumstances include but are not limited to:

- A request for a service or repair.
- A complaint regarding a repair, service, or action, where the timeframe we set to fulfil this is yet to pass.
- The complaint has already exhausted our policy and a Stage 2 response letter has been provided.
- Matters that relate to the wording of a policy.
- Insurance and personal injury claims; our insurers will handle these.
- Where the issue took place more than 12 months ago.
- The amount of Service Charge or Rent.



- Where legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Demoted Tenancy or License appeals, along with matters that have already been determined under this policy or another policy appeal process.
- Anonymous complaints.

5.7 A request for a service or repair is a request from an individual to Tuntum Housing Association requiring action to be taken to put something right. These are not classed as complaints and are logged in our Housing Management systems. Should an individual express dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing, we would continue to address the service request and log a complaint to respond to their concerns.

5.8 When we decide not to accept a complaint, we will write to the complainant explaining why the matter is unsuitable for the complaints policy and inform them of their right to access the HOS.

5.9 Where we deem the behaviour of a complainant to be unacceptable, we will seek to apply our Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

6.1 Frontline staff are our first point of contact to log complaints and provide a quick fix where appropriate.

6.2 Frontline staff and managers will handle complaints at Formal Stage 1 of our Complaints Policy, carrying out a timely investigation and reviewing the complaint fairly and transparently.

6.3 Managers will handle complaints at Formal Stage 2 of our Complaints Policy, responding to the reasons for the appeal and reviewing the handling of the complaint fairly and transparently.

6.4 The Customer Excellence Leader is responsible for:

- The complaint handling process.
- Facilitating complaints being logged and responded to within the timescales set within the policy.
- Providing support and advice to all staff to maintain a consistent approach in handling our complaints.
- Being the direct contact for the HOS to aid the effective resolution of complaints, and provide the information requested to aid investigations.
- Leading on reviewing the policy and bringing any review forward should a regulatory change occur that requires an amendment for compliance.
- Leading on facilitating the Association's learning from its complaints.
- Reporting performance to the Customer Experience Committee and the Board.

6.5 The Director of Operations will monitor performance, oversee complaint handling, and lead on how we learn from our complaints.

6.6 The Customer Experience Committee (CEC) will monitor, review and scrutinise performance through key performance indicators.

6.7 The Chair of the CEC has lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture. This person is the Member Responsible for Complaints ('the MRC') and is responsible for ensuring the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on our complaint handling performance.

6.8 The Board will monitor overall performance.

## **7. Reasonable Adjustments**



7.1 Tuntum Housing Association is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs, where needed.

This Policy adheres to the Associations approach to Equality and Diversity. All staff members will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this Policy.

## **8. Monitoring, including audit and review**

8.1 Performance related to this policy will be reported to the Customer Experience Committee.

8.2 Monthly performance reports will be provided to the Director of Operations and weekly performance snapshots will be available to the senior management team.

8.3 The Director of Operations will provide quality assurance by auditing the performance.

## **9. Procedure**

9.1 All our staff can help customers who want to make a complaint. They will log the complaint at Formal Stage 1 and provide a quick fix where appropriate, effectively resolving the problem without a lengthy investigation. A letter will be sent which acknowledges the complaint and details the response that was provided, no later than five working days of receipt.

9.2 Should a quick fix not be appropriate, we will log the complaint at Formal Stage 1 and provide a written acknowledgement letter within five working days of receipt. A written response will be sent to the complainant within ten working days. We may need to extend this timeframe by a further ten working days; when this happens, we will agree with the resident suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.

9.3 A Formal Stage 1 response may be appealed up to 12 months after the date of the response letter.

9.4 The complainant should make us aware that they would like to appeal the outcome of a Formal Stage 1 complaint and escalate it to Formal Stage 2. Should we accept the appeal, we will provide a written acknowledgement letter within five working days of receipt, containing the contact details of the person responsible for reviewing the complaint at Formal Stage 2. This person is different to the person who responded to the complaint at Formal Stage 1.

9.5 At Formal Stage 2, a written response will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated. The letter will respond to the reasons for the appeal, address whether the manager agrees with the Formal Stage 1 response and outline our final response. We may need to extend this timeframe by a further 20 working days; when this happens, we will communicate and explain the extension to the complainant.

9.6 We may decline a request for an appeal to the outcome of a Formal Stage 1 complaint; reasons for this are listed but not limited to those in section 4.8 Exclusions of this policy. Where we decide to decline a request for an appeal, we will write to the complainant within five working days to explain why we have come to a decision. This letter will clearly communicate that the response at Formal Stage 1 is our final response on the matter.

9.7 When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2 our acknowledgement letter will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the resident is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will seek clarification. We will be clear in our acknowledgement of the complaint which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for.



9.8 All acknowledgement, holding and formal response letters will inform the complainant of their right to access the HOS, and how they can engage with them.

9.9 If we cannot agree on an extension to the timescales we need, the complainant can contact the HOS to discuss the timescale for managing the complaint.

9.10 Our internal Complaints Procedure will aid the resolution of complaints by expanding on this policy and guiding staff.

## 10. Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 We will handle all complaints in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that making a complaint is accessible and easy for all.

10.2 Should a complainant need support to raise concerns, we will act to aid them by making reasonable adjustments to suit their needs. We keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments are kept under active review. Some examples of the support we can provide include providing information in alternative formats, adapting our communication method, and allowing more time for a complaint to be brought to our attention.

## 11. References

RELATED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	Link to reference
Housing Ombudsman Service – Complaint Handling Code 2024	<a href="http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/">www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/</a>
RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	
Complaints Procedure	
Compensation Policy	
Compensation Procedure	

## 12. Contacts

If you have any queries on this policy, please contact our Customer Excellence Leader.