



COMPLIMENTS / COMPLAINTS POLICY

<i>Title</i>	Compliments / Complaints Policy
Author	Policy Task Group
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Three Oaks Homes

Policy Objectives

Dealing with Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions	SECTION 1 – POLICY OBJECTIVES	Cross Reference / Notes
1.1	<p>Policy Statement</p> <p>Three Oaks Homes aims to deliver excellent standards of service to all its customers. We recognise that sometimes things go wrong, or that the services we offer may not always meet our customer’s expectations. We also recognise the benefit of positive feedback, and of listening to customers’ views and ideas.</p> <p>The purpose of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give customers the opportunity to compliment the service where it exceeds their expectations; • give customers the opportunity to make complaints or suggestions for service improvement and to have these reviewed promptly by staff; • highlight any areas of excellence or of common complaint, from which the Association can learn and, if necessary, adapt its behaviour; • raise overall levels of customer satisfaction; • create a climate where service improvement is seen as an on-going partnership between the Association and its customers. 	
1.2	<p>Scope of the Policy</p> <p>1.2.1 What is a complaint?</p> <p>A complaint is defined as a customer’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of service provision, delivery, Three Oaks Homes policy or member of staff.</p> <p>1.2.2 In general terms, staff receiving complaints need to bear in mind the distinction between “complaints” that are a request for service (e.g.: a repair request, report about an Anti-Social Behaviour incident) and a</p>	

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1.2.3	<p>complaint about Three Oaks Homes in respect of a failure of service (such as a delay in completing a repair, failure to meet service standards, failure to apply policy etc). It is the latter context (i.e.: failure of service) to which this document generally refers.</p>	
1.2.4	<p>A complaint about a contractor or consultant's performance should be addressed through this Complaints Procedure as it falls within Three Oaks Homes control.</p>	
1.2.4.1	<p>Anyone who uses, seeks to use, or is affected by the Association's services is entitled to make a complaint. This includes applicants for housing, neighbours of Three Oaks Homes residents, our contractors, members of the general public etc.</p>	
1.2.5	<p>Corporate Partners are also entitled to make a complaint under this policy. A different process applies for consideration of the complaint and this is referred to in section 1.2.10 .</p>	
1.2.6	<p>A complaint will not usually be considered where more than four months has elapsed between the cause of the complaint and it being brought to the attention of the Association.</p> <p>Informal Complaints</p> <p>An informal complaint is where the customer contacts us to make us aware of their dissatisfaction with an aspect of our service and where a satisfactory remedy can be found on the spot. For instance: where a contractor or member of staff has failed to keep an appointment and the customer merely wants a second appointment to be made. Where this is the case an apology should be offered and the customer should be advised that a record will be kept of the service failure. The customer should be asked if they wish this to be considered as a formal complaint. If they do, then the formal complaints procedure set out below should be followed. In all cases, a record of the contact should be made on the complaints database in order for trends to</p>	

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<p>1.2.7</p> <p>1.2.8</p> <p>1.2.9</p>	<p>be monitored and lessons learned.</p> <p>Once a complaint has been made, a full investigation will be carried out following the stages of the procedure. If the complaint is found to be justified, this will be acknowledged and an apology given. Steps will then be taken to remedy the situation.</p> <p>Informal complaints may remain anonymous if the customer so wishes.</p> <p>Formal Complaints</p> <p>A formal complaint is either where the customer makes it clear that they wish to complain, or where a service failure needs to be investigated and cannot be resolved on the spot.</p> <p>The policy is a staged process. Customers will have the opportunity to progress to the next stage if the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction. The stages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Stage - to be dealt with at local or departmental level by an appropriate member of staff (in practice this could be any member of office or site based staff below Departmental Manager level). • Formal Stage 1 - Complaint to be dealt with by an appropriate Manager (in practice Head of section/Departmental Manager). • Formal Stage 2 - Appeal to Complaints Panel (Panel to consist of Head of Service and 2 Board Members, one would normally be a tenant) • Formal Stage 3 - Appeal to the Housing Ombudsman Service. <p>People who are refused access to our waiting list should use the appeals procedure as detailed in the Lettings Policy. However, once this has been exhausted, the complaint will enter this procedure at Formal Stage 2.</p> <p>Complaints about neighbour nuisance should be dealt</p>	

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1.2.10	<p>with in accordance with the Anti Social Behaviour Policy.</p> <p>(If however, the complaint relates to process or our failure to deal with the issues raised, this would be dealt with under this Policy).</p> <p>Complaints relating to the recruitment and selection of employees should be dealt with in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy.</p> <p>Complaints by corporate partners</p> <p>Complaints by corporate partners need to be dealt with according to the following principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Informal and Formal complaints are subject to the same time constraints as detailed throughout this policy. • Informal complaints are dealt with in section 1.2.8. • Formal complaints are logged using the Complaints form and database in the normal way. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These are then passed to the service director for investigation and response. - There is no right of appeal to the Complaints Panel, instead the appeal will be considered by the RSL Managing Director (MD) or Chief Executive (CE) whose decision is final. - The MD / CE will respond to the appeal in writing within the same time constraints as the Complaints Panel would apply. 	
1.3	<p>Customer Care</p> <p>A robust complaints policy is essential to put right any failures in service. However, it is not a substitute for getting things right first time. Therefore training of all staff is important, and any complaint made should be assessed by the relevant manager to see if a training issue has arisen.</p>	

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1.4	<p>Publicity</p> <p>The policy will be publicised in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the tenants’ handbooks • by separate leaflet • in the residents’ newsletter • Three Oaks Homes website <p>Publicity will make clear that the policy is available in translation and other accessible formats.</p>	
1.5 1.5.1 1.5.2	<p>Equal Opportunities and Equality of Access</p> <p>Some individuals may be discouraged from complaining because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have poor communication skills • they have poor literacy skills • they have a disability which makes it harder for them to communicate • English is not their first language <p>It is the Association’s responsibility to ensure all its customers have equal access to the complaints system. Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complaints do not have to be made in writing – details can be taken over the telephone, or face to face. This applies to all stages of the process; • where an individual has particular communication difficulties, it may be appropriate to take details by personal interview or home visit; • if necessary, other means of communication should be considered – e.g. using tape, obtaining translations if required, use of Language Line or Braille; • some individuals will prefer to have the support of an advocate. This may be a friend, relative or 	

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<p>1.5.3</p> <p>1.6</p> <p>1.6.1</p>	<p>professional advocacy service such as citizen’s advice.</p> <p>In all cases, details of the complaint and relevant information must be taken down on the standard Complaints Form.</p> <p>Monitoring All formal complaints received and the responses to the complainants must be recorded to monitor their progress and also to provide information on the number and nature of complaints and actions taken.</p> <p>This information will be reported to the Board of Management and published in Newsletters on an annual basis.</p>	