



<p style="text-align: center;">HORNSEY HOUSING TRUST COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE</p>
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CONTENTS

THE TRUST’S POLICY ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 3
WHAT WE MEAN BY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS	Page 3
REGULATORY STANDARDS	Page 4
THE TRUST’S PLEDGES TO TENANTS	Page 4
COMPENSATION	Page 5
MONITORING AND REPORTING ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS	Page 5
HOW THE TRUST WILL MEASURE SUCCESS	Page 6
POLICY REVIEW	Page 6

THE TRUST’S PROCEDURE ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 7
RECEIVING A COMPLAINT	Page 7
STAGE ONE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS	Page 7
STAGE TWO OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS	Page 8
STAGE THREE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS	Page 9
PETITIONS	Page 10
COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE	Page 11
MONITORING AND REPORTING ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS	Page 11

HORNSEY HOUSING TRUST'S POLICY ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Hornsey Housing Trust (the Trust) considers that complaints and compliments are a valuable way of learning what is being done right and what is not being done so well. The Trust welcomes feedback from tenants and third parties, whether it is good or bad, and will make use of this information to help with continually improving services.

This policy sets out how the Trust will deal with complaints and compliments from tenants, applicants, or anyone who comes into contact with the Trust. It also sets out how the Trust will monitor, analyse and make use of this information.

2. WHAT WE MEAN BY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the action, lack of action, or standard of service that is given by the Trust, members of staff or any representative of the Trust, such as a contractor.

Complaints may arise from:

- Not advising tenants or users of their rights correctly
- Poor attitude or behaviour of representatives of the Trust
- Not delivering services to agreed standards or timescales

The following will not be treated as a complaint under this policy:

- Where legal action has been started
- Where the complaint is about another tenant (this will be dealt with under tenancy management or the antisocial behaviour policy)
- Where the complaint is about a Board member (this will be dealt with by the Chair under the Board's Code of Conduct)
- Where the Trust has no duty for delivering the service e.g. decisions about housing benefit claims

Where the complaint is not covered by this procedure, the Trust will refer the person to best source of help or redress.

Compliments

A compliment is where the Trust receives a positive comment about the service or a member of staff. This can be praise or just a general thank you for something that has done well.

3. REGULATORY STANDARDS ON HOW WE DEAL WITH COMPLAINTS

The Trust is regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency which requires it to:

- Have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible, and that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly;
- Offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint, set out clear service standards for responding to complaints and give details of what to do if the person complaining is unhappy about the outcome of the complaint;
- Inform tenants how the Trust will use the outcome of complaints to improve services;
- Publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints;
- Accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a tenant's/tenants' behalf.

4. THE TRUST'S PLEDGES TO TENANTS ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The Trust makes the following pledges to tenants regarding how it will deal with complaints and compliments:

It will:

- Take all complaints seriously and thoroughly investigate all complaints;
- Deal with all complaints politely and fairly;
- Offer guidance and assistance to anyone wishing to make a complaint or give a compliment;
- Acknowledge and deal with Complaints in accordance with the timescales and in the manner which is set out in sections 3 to 5 of the Complaints and Compliments Procedure;

- Acknowledge the receipt of all Complaints and Compliments and ensure that, in the case of a Compliment, it is passed on to the right person.

If a mistake has been made, the Trust will admit this and apologise

5. COMPENSATION

The Trust recognises that there are times when the service may fall considerably below what should be expected or where a tenant suffers a loss because of a failure on the part of a Trust employee or representative. In these circumstances, the Trust will consider compensation. Except for situations where the statutory compensation applies, the Trust will consider the following compensation methods:

- Letter of apology
- Flowers/Gift vouchers
- Financial payment

Where the fault is as a result of a service failure on the part of a third party, such as a contractor, the Trust will seek reimbursement from the third party.

6. MONITORING AND REPORTING ON COMPLAINTS

The Trust will use the information and outcome of complaints and compliments as a positive method of monitoring performance, improving services and assessing the impact of policies.

The Trust will produce quarterly reports for the Board and for Residents showing:

- Number of complaints and compliments received at each stage including Ombudsman complaints
- Number of complaints upheld
- Reasons for compliments and complaints
- Lessons learned and/or actions taken
- Satisfaction with complaints handling

The Trust will also produce these details on an annual basis and publish these in its Annual Report.

7. HOW SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED

The key aims of this policy are to encourage positive and negative feedback about the Trust's services, deal with all complaints quickly and effectively, and use the information about complaints to improve services.

The following targets will be used to measure whether this policy has been a success:

- 95% of all complaints to have been acknowledged and responded to within the target time after 12 months;
- 75% or tenants who make a complaint are satisfied with how their complaint has been dealt with;
- 90% of the actions in the action plan in this strategy are completed in target.

8. POLICY REVIEW

To ensure that this policy remains current and takes into account all up to date legislation, it will be reviewed at least once every three years.

THE TRUST'S PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This procedure sets out how staff should deal with complaints and compliments from tenants, applicants or anyone who comes into contact with the Trust and should be read together with the Trust's policy on complaints and compliments.

The procedure also sets out how managers should monitor, analyse, make use of and report information about complaints and compliments to the Board and to residents.

2. RECEIVING A COMPLAINT

Anyone can make a complaint to the Trust, whether it is at its offices, in a tenant's home or at one of the sheltered blocks. Complaints do not have to be made in writing and can be made by telephone, by e-mail or face to face.

The Trust encourages a culture where complaints are used to learn and improve services, so it is important that they are recorded as accurately as possible.

When a complaint is made, whether verbally or in writing, officers should make every effort to help the person making the complaint to articulate what the problem is and to help them document their complaint. This may entail completing the complaints form on their behalf or getting interpreters involved.

As soon as a complaint has been received, it should be logged on to the Complaints Database. An acknowledgement letter should be sent within three working days that sets out:

- Who is dealing with the complaint,
- The date the person making the complaint can expect a response.

A Complaints and Compliments Leaflet should also be enclosed.

3. STAGE ONE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

The complaint will normally be investigated by the staff member who is involved in the issue in order to give them an opportunity to put it right. However, if the complaint is about a member of staff, the complaint will be dealt with by his or her line manager.

The officer dealing with the complaint at Stage One should contact the person making the complaint to make sure they have understood all of the details, investigate the complaint fully and respond within 10 working days. If it is not possible to give a full answer to the complaint within 10 working days, a letter should be sent to the complainant advising them why it has not been possible to respond within the target date and advising them when a full response will be sent.

Where a complaint is about a contractor, the contractor should be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint, but the officer to whom the complaint has been allocated is responsible for co-ordinating the response and ensuring that the response is sent within 10 working days.

All response letters to Stage One complaints must advise the person making the complaint of their right to take it to the next stage if they are not satisfied with the response and that they can do this by contacting Hornsey Housing Trust within 15 working days.

The following wording should be used at the end of the letter and highlighted in bold:

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Stage One complaint, you have the right to take this to Stage Two of the Trust's Complaints Procedure where your complaint will be investigated by the manager for the service. You will need to contact us or write to us within 15 working days to advise why you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint.

4. STAGE TWO OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Stage Two complaints are investigated by the manager for the service. The complaints database should be updated to show that a Stage Two complaint has been received and an acknowledgement sent to the person making the complaint within 3 working days.

The complaint should be fully investigated and a response sent to the person making the complaint within 10 working days.

The response letter will again advise the person making the complaint of their right to take their complaint to the next stage if they are not satisfied with this response.

The following wording should be used at the end of the letter and be highlighted in bold:

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your Stage Two complaint, you have the right to take this to Stage Three of the Trust's Complaints Procedure where your complaint will be investigated by the Chief Executive. If you wish to make a Stage Three complaint, you will need to contact us or write to us within 15 working days to advise why you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint.

5. STAGE THREE OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Stage Three complaints will be investigated by the Chief Executive. An acknowledgement must be sent out within 3 working days and a full response sent out within 15 days. The person making the complaint should be invited in to speak to the Chief Executive face to face if they wish to do so to explain their case in person. An advocate can attend the meeting to help put across the case, but not a solicitor or legal representative.

This is the final stage of the Trust's internal complaints process and all further complaints must be made to the Housing Ombudsman.

The following wording should be used at the end of the Stage Three response letter and highlighted in bold:

This is the end of the Trust's complaints procedure. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman. Please contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman for more advice:

Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, WC2B 4HN.

Tel: 0300 111 3000

e-mail info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

If the complaint relates to a service receiving Supporting People funding, a complaint can be made to Haringey Council and the Local Government Ombudsman can investigate where the issue remains unresolved following this.

In these cases, the following wording should be used:

This is the end of Hornsey Housing Trust's Complaints Procedure. If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you can contact the Housing Related Support Team at Haringey Council. The team are based at:

**Apex House
820 Seven Sisters Road
London
N15 5PQ**

Tel 020 8489 3372

Alternatively, you can contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman for more advice:

Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, WC2B 4HN.

Tel: 0300 111 3000

E-mail info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Housing Ombudsman will only consider complaints when a complainant has been through all three stages of the complaints process.

6. PETITIONS

Where petitions are received, they will automatically be considered by the **service manager** and a response sent to the lead petitioner. Where it is not clear who the lead petitioner is, a response will be sent to the person who has first signed the petition.

7. COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE

When a compliment is received, it is important that the compliment is acknowledged and that the sender of the compliment is thanked for their effort.

If the compliment relates to the behaviour of a member of staff, this should also be acknowledged and the member of staff thanked in writing for their effort or behaviour.

8. MONITORING AND REPORTING ON COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Where a complaint has not been taken to the next stage or at the end of the complaints process, a satisfaction form will be sent to the person making the complaint to assess how satisfied they are with how the complaint has been dealt with.

The service manager is responsible for monitoring responses to complaints and compliments to ensure that this procedure and the policy are being met, and also for analysing the information.

The Corporate Services Manager will produce quarterly information for the Board and for the Residents showing:

- Number of Complaints and Compliments received at each stage including Ombudsman complaints
- Number of Complaints upheld
- Reasons for Compliments and Complaints
- Lessons learned and/or actions taken
- Satisfaction with complaints handling

