

Complaints Policy

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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Hornsey Housing Trust (“the Trust”) is committed to providing a high quality service for its tenants and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our tenants and in particular, by responding positively to complaints, and by putting mistakes right when things have gone wrong.
- 1.2 Where you let us know about a service failure, such as a member of our staff or a contractor failing to keep to or attend an appointment without notice, we will aim to resolve the problem on the same day – before you need to make a complaint.
- 1.3 The Trust is committed to ensuring that no person or group will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality: age, disability, gender, race, transgender, sexual orientation, maternity, pregnancy, marital status and religion and/or belief.
- 1.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with our Compensation Policy, Service Standards, Customer Service Policy and the Tenant Handbook.

2.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The Regulator for Social Housing requires housing associations to have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible.
- 2.2 This includes a mechanism for ‘designated persons’ to consider complaints that have proceeded through social landlords’ complaints procedure without resolution rather than being escalated directly to the Housing Ombudsman.
- 2.4 The Secure Tenants of Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 entitles secure tenants of local housing authorities to have qualifying repairs carried out at their landlord’s expense and receive compensation from their landlord if qualifying repairs are not carried out within a prescribed period.

3.0 WHAT CAN YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT?

- 3.1 You can make a complaint if we have:
 - 3.1.1 Done something incorrectly or badly, which has resulted in your getting less than the promised standard of service, such as:
 - Giving you inaccurate information
 - Providing unclear or incomplete replies to your enquiries

- Issues relating to the type of property you have been offered
- Not carrying out a repair properly

3.1.2 Done something we shouldn't have, such as:

- Discriminating against you or treated you unfairly
- Being rude
- Breaking appointments without telling you
- Not following one of our policies in providing you with a service

3.1.3 Failed to do something we should have done, such as:

- Responding to your letters/queries appropriately
- Following procedures for dealing with your query

4.0 **WHAT WILL NOT BE TREATED AS A COMPLAINT?**

- Reports of fly tipping or vandalism
- Requests for a repair or improvement works
- Neighbour nuisance or anti-social behaviour reports
- Complaints about services which aren't our responsibility – for example, decisions about housing benefit, council tax reductions or nominations, which should be reported to Haringey Council
- Complaints about the actions of an organisation that is not working for, or supported by the Trust – such as Haringey Council or a care agency
- Insurance claims – our Finance Team will deal with any claims on our building's insurance. Residents are responsible for claims on their content's insurance
- Commercial decisions – for example, a decision to dispose of some of our properties
- Anything which happened more than six months ago which you did not report at the time

Although we do not treat these issues as a complaint under this procedure, we will deal with them in an appropriate manner.

5.0 HOW TO COMPLAIN ABOUT A REPAIR OR THE REPAIRS SERVICE

5.1 Since November 2019, the Trust's day-to-day repairs service has been managed by Newlon Housing Trust in partnership with repairs contractor, Wates. There is therefore a slightly different procedure for making a complaint regarding a repair or the repairs service.

5.2 In the first instance, tenants dissatisfied with a repair; the actions of anyone working in the repairs service at Newlon; or an operative should contact Newlon Housing Trust. You can do this:

- By email: HHTrepairs@newlon.org.uk or serviceresolution@newlon.org.uk
- By telephone: 020 7613 8080
- Using the designated website complaints form:
<https://www.newlon.org.uk/residents/making-a-complaint/complaint-form/>
- If you live in one of our sheltered schemes and would like some help making a complaint about a repair, you can ask your Support Services Officer to help you with making your complaint or to make a complaint on your behalf.
- If you live in one of our street properties and would like some help making a complaint about a repair, you can ask your Housing Officer to help you with making your complaint or to make a complaint on your behalf.

5.3 What happens when Newlon receive a complaint?

5.4 A member of staff will ask whether you would like to make a formal or informal complaint. In some cases, where you are unhappy about or dissatisfied with something that could be put right fairly quickly, you may prefer to make an informal complaint. An example of something you might like to make an informal complaint about could include:

- A single missed repair appointment
- A repair which was not completed on time and you would like an explanation
- A lack of update regarding an ongoing repair

5.5 If you make an informal complaint, you will receive a response from a member of the team responsible for the repairs service. You can request this response be either in writing or by telephone, and you will usually receive a response within 48 hours.

5.6 If you decide to make a formal complaint, Newlon will manage it as follows:

Early resolution stage

If you make a complaint, Newlon will focus on resolving your complaint in their 'early resolution stage'. Newlon will apologise and put things right quickly. Newlon will seek to

make whatever reasonable changes they can to resolve the complaint. They will let you know what they plan to do within 5 working days.

The primary focus is on speed of resolution, not investigation and apportionment of blame. A member of staff will work with you to resolve the complaint informally.

Stage One

Where the complaint cannot be resolved to your satisfaction informally, and/or within 5 working days, it will be logged as a Stage One complaint and the Service Resolution Team will deal with your enquiry and give you a full response within 10 working days.

Where this deadline cannot be met due to the complexity of the case you will be advised when you will get a response.

Stage Two

If you are unhappy with the response you receive at Stage One you should appeal within 28 days by calling Newlon's Service Centre on **020 7613 8080** or emailing **quality@newlon.org.uk**. You will be asked to state why you are unhappy with the Stage One response, what issues remain outstanding and what you would like Newlon to do to resolve the matter. Newlon will then refer the complaint to Hornsey Housing Trust, and it will be dealt with as at Stage Two of the Trust's internal procedure (see section 6.3.)

Stage three

If you are still not satisfied, you can refer the complaint to the Chief Executive. You will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive in person to explain your case in more detail.

6.0 HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE

6.1 If you would like to complain about anything else except a repair, you should contact Hornsey Housing Trust directly. Before making a complaint, you may wish to try and resolve the matter informally by talking to the member of staff you were dealing with on the query. Often, we will be able to put it right quickly or reach a decision you are satisfied with.

6.2 If you still wish to make a complaint you can do so using the following methods:

- In person at our offices
- To a member of staff when they visit you
- By letter
- By telephone

- By email
- By text message
- Using the contact form on our website

6.3 There are three stages to our complaint's procedure:

STAGE		Response time (working days)
One	An officer or manager for the service about which you are complaining will investigate your complaint.	10
Two	If you feel the result is unsatisfactory, you will be able to ask for a member of the Leadership Management Team (either the Head of Housing; Asset Manager; or Head of Finance) to try to resolve the matter or you can contact Liz Hanley, the Chief Executive's Executive Assistant.	15
Three	If you are still not satisfied, you can refer the complaint to the Chief Executive. You will be offered the opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive in person to explain your case in more detail.	20

6.4 In order to escalate the complaint from Stage One to Stage Two, or Stage Two to Stage Three, you must explain the area of your original complaint that you feel has not been adequately addressed, why you remain dissatisfied and what actions you are seeking to resolve the complaint.

6.5 The review carried out at each stage will consider if the original complaint has been fairly and thoroughly investigated and whether the original decision should be upheld or overturned.

6.6 If you are not satisfied after the three-stage procedure has been exhausted, you can take your case to the Housing Ombudsman Service. This service is completely independent of the Trust and is free to use. Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ, info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk, www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

7.0 COMPENSATION

7.1 Where complainants have suffered actual loss or damage, they may be compensated accordingly. Compensation will be paid direct to you unless you owe us money (e.g., current or former rent/service charge arrears), in which case the compensation will be used first to offset any arrears.

7.2 Compensation may be considered in the following circumstances:

- When certain qualifying repairs have not been completed on time
- When we have failed to keep an appointment and not let you know in advance, and you have suffered income loss as a result
- When a room in your home cannot be used because of lack of repair
- If we, or our contractors, damage your belongings
- If your belongings are damaged because of disrepair and you can show this is due to our negligence – such as our contractor failing to attend to a leak within time.

7.3 You will not be eligible for compensation:

- For losses resulting from accidental damage to your home e.g., a leak of water or burst pipe; unless damage was caused due to our negligence as above. Tenants should have their own contents insurance and should claim on this
- If you refused access to your home or did not keep an agreed appointment
- The loss or service failure was not our responsibility
- Where no actual loss or damage has occurred

8.0 PERFORMANCE

8.1 All complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction are recorded. We monitor the number of complaints and the service areas to which they relate. The Board receive quarterly information about complaints.

8.2 Lessons learned from complaint investigations and service improvements are recorded, reported, and discussed at staff team meetings.

8.3 Opportunities will be provided for sharing information from complaints handling and shaping service improvement plans. This may be through the tenant newsletter, the Link; formal service review panels; at scheme resident engagement meetings; or by any other method agreed with our involved residents.

8.4 Complaints are to be part of the new tenant engagement strategy.

8.5 HHT will publish complaints records in the Link and what the Trust have learned from the complaints.

9.0 REVIEW

9.1 The Policy will be reviewed as a minimum every three years, from the date it is approved by the Hornsey Housing Trust Board, to ensure its suitability, adequacy and effectiveness or as required by issues that may come to light through operation of the Policy and its supporting procedures.

Approved by:	Hornsey Housing Trust Board of Management
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