

Red Devon Housing Limited Complaints Policy

Document: RDH02 – Complaints Policy (V.2024)

Purpose

This policy is for the guidance of Staff and Committee Members when dealing with complaints. The aim is to deal with complaints promptly, sensitively, impartially and in complete confidence.

Complaints can be made by residents in person, or by representative, advocate or relative on a resident's behalf. Complaints can also be forthcoming from external individuals and organisations.

Although it is hoped that complaints will be minimal but it is recognised that there is a right (and the company supports that right) to complain when service users, relatives or outside agencies, are dissatisfied with any aspect of the service we provide.

Staff and Committee members should recognise that complaints can be used as a positive feedback tool the resolution of which can be used proactively to determine forward planning and of service in conjunction with service users and support staff.

Internal Informal Complaints

An informal complaint should be made verbally and is the first step. In most cases this will be the only step necessary in order to resolve an issue of concern.

- 1) A complaint should first be passed to the House Manager to deal with the issue. In many cases a problem can be resolved quickly and effectively at this initial informal level.

If the House Manager is not available at the time a complaint is made, the Tenancy Support Officer on duty should be informed. The TSO will help resolve a problem if s/he can. When approached the TSO will inform the House Manager of the complaint irrespective of whether or not it has been resolved. A record will also be made in the TSO diary.

In most cases the House Manager or TSO will be able to resolve the issue on the day it is raised. If, in the unlikely event, this is not possible, an informal meeting with the complainant should take place the next day at the very latest. It is usual that the discussion will take place in the TSO office or resident's flat if this is preferred. A second member of staff or committee member should be present as a witness. The complainant is permitted to bring their own witness if desired. A record of the meeting must be kept by the House Manager, other staff or committee member.

Internal Formal Complaints

A formal complaint is one that is made in writing when an informal complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved. The complaint should be clear and precise, giving details of names, dates pertinent to the issues so that the whole problem can be investigated.

- 2) Formal complaints should be directed to a designated member of the Management Committee.

S/he will decide how a complaint will be investigated, what action will be taken and will inform the complainant of the details of the response. The committee member will respond to a complaint in writing within a week after the investigation is completed.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the response, and feels that the matter is not fully resolved, the complaint should be referred by the complainant, in writing, to the Chair of the Management Committee.

- 3) The Chair will acknowledge a complaint within seven days. If the Chair of the Management Committee is away when a complaint is made s/he will contact the complainant within seven days of his/her return. S/he will inform the complainant what action will be taken to resolve the problem and how long this is likely to take.

If the complainant feels that the complaint has still not been resolved after following this process the complainant should be advised to take their complaint to the final stage by writing to the Independent Housing Ombudsman at the following address:

- 4) The Independent Housing Ombudsman Ltd
Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Help and advice can also be obtained (including an online complaint form) from their website at: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

Complaints From External Individuals Or Organisations

When a complaint is made by an external individual or organisation it must be referred via the House Manager to the Chair of the Management Committee (or in his/her absence another Committee member) immediately if possible but certainly within 24 hours of being received. However, the Chair of the Management Committee must be informed, before the next meeting of that Committee, as to any action taken to resolve the complaint and the outcomes.

Should there be a failure to resolve the issue by the company a complainant should be referred to the Independent Housing Ombudsman or other appropriate authority as necessary.