

## **Service User's Guide to Complaints**

### **What is a Complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the associations action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided, which requires a response.

It is important to note that a complaint is not an initial request for a service, such as reporting a faulty door lock, or an appeal against a 'properly made' decision. A 'properly made' decision is one where the relevant laws, policies and procedures have been correctly followed in arriving at a decision e.g. setting the rent or being removed from the waiting list as part of a legitimate review process.

There are other circumstances where we may decide not to accept a complaint, and these are detailed in our Complaints Policy, which you can read here: [..\Concerns and Complaints Policy Approved by Board 2017 Revised 04.12.2020..docx](#)

Where we decide not to accept a complaint, we will write to you to explain the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process, and you will have the right to challenge this decision by taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

### **How can I make a Complaint?**

You can make a Complaint in whatever way you choose – by telephone, email, via our website, in person, or by letter.

### **What should be Complaint include?**

To best help us understand your Complaint, you should explain clearly and specifically what you are unhappy about, how this has affected you and what you think we should do to put things right.

### **What happens once I have made a Complaint?**

Once we have received your complaint, we will acknowledge it formally in writing within 5 working days. Wherever possible, we will tell you in the letter who will be investigating your complaint – this person is called the Investigating Officer. You can expect the Investigating Officer to get in touch with you to discuss your complaint further. Once we have investigated your complaint, we will respond to you formally in writing with our findings, within 20 working days of the date of the acknowledgement.

### **What if I am not happy with your response?**

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can request a review by our Chief Executive. You must request the review in writing within 15 working days of the date of our response letter. We will acknowledge your review request formally in writing within 5 working days. The Chief Executive will then review your complaint and respond to you within 20 working days of the date of the acknowledgement.

### **What if I am still not happy with the Chief Executive's response?**

If you remain unhappy with the Chief Executive's response, you have the right to have your complaint reviewed by a 'designated person'. A designated person can be an MP, a local Councillor,

or a recognised Tenant Panel (please note Arawak Walton has not recognised a Tenant Panel for this purpose at this time). You can read more about this here: <H:\Business Support Team\Complaints Reporting\Complaints, Comms & Comps 2020-21\Leaflet on designated persons.docx>

If you are still not satisfied and a further 8-weeks have elapsed, you can appeal to the Housing Ombudsman Ltd. Their details are:

81 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN  
Tel: 0300 111 3000

Or you can contact them through their web site: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)