

Policy

**Complaints, Compliments &
Comments**

Wellhouse - The Place To Be

Policy Created:	March 2016
Policy Reviewed:	March 2017, June 2019, April 2020, February 2022
Date of Next Review:	April 2025

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Linked Policies/Procedures

1.	Neighbourhood Management Policy
2.	Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
3.	Social Media Policy

1. Vision and values

Wellhouse – the Place to Be.

This simple statement is our vision of Wellhouse as an attractive place where people feel happy and safe, benefit from having a good home and an attractive environment and feel proud to be part of a vibrant community.

We believe that our values of Trust, Honesty and Integrity, Excellence, Accountability and Sustainability supported by a comprehensive policy framework will help make our vision a reality.

2. Governance

Wellhouse HA is a community controlled registered social landlord and is managed by a group of local people who are elected onto the Management Committee. Their role is to make sure that the Association is well run, meets the needs of the local area and is responsive to what is important to local people.

The Management Committee appoints senior staff, agrees all the Association's policies and takes all the key decisions. The Director and the senior team support the Committee in these responsibilities.

3. Policy - Aims

The aim of the Complaints, Compliments & Comments policy is: -

- To deliver a complaints service that meets Wellhouse HA's service standards.
- To facilitate organisational learning from complaints.
- To work collaboratively internally, with partner organisations and other agencies where necessary to coordinate comprehensive outcomes to complaints.
- To facilitate the effective and early resolution of complaints.
- To use the analysis of complaints to help Wellhouse improve services and reduce the level of complaints.
- To manage all complaints in an open and accountable way.

4. Equal Opportunities & Human Rights Statement

We aim to ensure that all services, including the delivery of this policy, provide equality of opportunity.

We will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals. We will not discriminate against any individual for any reason, including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or other status.

5. Introduction

Wellhouse HA recognises that providing a high standard of service delivery is essential. The proper handling of complaints is therefore one of Wellhouse HA's highest priorities. Staff members are trained to perceive complaints as a valuable source of information about services and processes that handled in the correct manner can assist in continuous improvement.

The Housing and Customer Service Manager is responsible for reviewing and updating the policy.

6. The Policy

Wellhouse Housing Association Complaints Procedure

We are committed to providing high-quality customer services. We value complaints, compliments and other comments, and use information from them to help us improve our services. Compliments and comments give us useful feedback on what is working well. If something goes wrong or customers are dissatisfied with our services, we want them to tell us. This is our complaints procedure.

What is a Complaint?

Anyone can make a complaint to us; e.g. tenants, former tenants, factored owners, housing applicants or local residents, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied.

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf (e.g. by our contractors). Complaints may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

Customers can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- dissatisfaction with our policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour
- a request for compensation
- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal: for example, if a customer is dissatisfied with the level of priority given when applying for a house, they may have the right to appeal against the decision
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a stage 2 investigation. If a customer is still not satisfied, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help resolve concerns, we will give information and advice to help.

Complaints Procedure

Customers can complain in person at our office, in writing, email, social media, or by using the contact form on our information leaflet.

Any member of staff can receive or identify a complaint and seek to resolve them and provide a resolution immediately. However, it is easier for us to resolve complaints if they are made quickly and directly to the service concerned. Therefore, we will encourage customers to talk to staff so they can try to resolve any problems on the spot and the most relatively skilled team will deal with a complaint at each stage.

Complaints relating to repairs, planned maintenance, contractors, gas servicing, medical adaptations, close cleaning, back court maintenance and energy efficiency, will be investigated by the Assets and Maintenance Team.

Complaints relating to the factoring service, rent payments, housing applications, allocations, housing support and estate management will be investigated by the Housing and Customer Service Team.

Complaints relating to office contracts, data protection, financial reporting, invoicing, website maintenance and office contracts will be investigated by the Finance and Corporate Services Team.

Line Managers will investigate complaints about members of staff.

When complaining, we ask customers to tell us:

- their full name and address
- as much as they can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how they want us to resolve the matter.

Timescales

Normally, we expect a complaint to be made within six months of:

- the event complained about, or
- finding a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If a customer feels that the time limit should not apply, we will ask them to tell us why.

Anonymous Complaints

These can be difficult to investigate and resolve. However, we will consider the content of any anonymous complaint and where feasible, act upon them. We will accept complaints that are received via social media; however, we will block vexatious or malicious posts.

Compliments & Comments

These also help us to improve our service to Customers. We welcome verbal or written comments to staff by telephone, email, social media or the feedback form on our information leaflet.

Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage one – Frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation, if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem. All cases where issues have been resolved amicably at the outset will be recorded and the outcomes will be used as learning points to improve future service delivery. This will be called a Resolution Category and as such they will be recorded, monitored and reported in the Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator, along with all other categories of complaints. In all cases where complaints have been resolved at the outset, complainers will be advised that they may escalate the complaint to Stage 1.

We will give a decision at stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If we can't resolve a complaint at this stage, we will explain why. If the customer is still dissatisfied, they can ask for their complaint to be investigated further (Stage 2). We can help customers to make this request.

Stage two – Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. Stage 2 complaints will be handled by the relevant Senior Manager.

At stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days
- discuss the complaint with the customer to understand why they remain dissatisfied and what outcome they are looking for
- Give the customer a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell the customer. We will agree revised time limits with the customer and keep them updated on progress.

Reporting, Monitoring and Learning from Complaints

When a complaint has been concluded, the investigating officer will directly contact the complainer by telephone, email or other suitable method, to enquire about the level of satisfaction about the way the complaint was handled. This information will be recorded and utilised to improve the customer journey and service delivery.

The Management Team will make regular reports to the Management Committee on the nature, number and resolution of complaints at the Resolution stage, stages 1 and 2. The Committee wishes to be assured that matters have been properly investigated and fairly resolved. Reports will include details of learning outcomes and changes as a result of complaints, compliments and comments.

Unresolved Complaints

After we have fully investigated, if a customer is still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with their complaint, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO **cannot** normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure
- events that happened, or that the customer became aware of, more than a year ago
- A matter that has been or is being considered in court.

The SPSO may be contacted:

In Person:

SPSO
99 McDonald Rd
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

By Post:

Freepost SPSO
(this is all you need to write
on the envelope)

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Or call : 0131 225 5300

Online contact www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Factoring Complaints

We will treat complaints from owners about our factoring service according to this procedure. The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about our factoring service. The Scotland Housing and Property Chamber will try to resolve complaints if they are not resolved by this internal procedure.

Glasgow Tribunals Centre
20 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8GT
Tel- 0141 302 5900

Website – HPCA@scotcourtribunals.gov.uk

Significant Performance Failure Reports to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systematic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. We ask customers affected by a problem like this, to first report it to us. If we have been told about it but the customer feels we have not resolved it, they can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and us as their landlord is not a significant performance failure. However, customers can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. We will refer them to the SHR and its website <http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/>

Providing help to make a complaint

We understand that customers may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint. We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. We will assist customers to explain and submit their complaints, including by providing information in appropriate languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).

We also accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if they have been given consent to complain on a customer's behalf. We will advise customers they can contact advocates in our area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or Citizens Advice Bureau:

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 260 5380 Fax: 0131 260 5381 Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: www.cas.org.uk

And phone book for the local bureau.

General Data Protection Regulations

The organisation will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own policy GDPR Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Wellhouse HA's privacy notice

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

