

## Bristol Community Land Trust

# Feedback and Complaints Policy

Date approved by board: 12/12/2024  
Policy lead: Complaints Officer  
Publicly available online: [www.bristolclt.co.uk](http://www.bristolclt.co.uk)  
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### Content

1. Policy Statement /Purpose
  - 1.1. Defining types of requests and feedback
2. Legal and Regulatory Context
3. Policy Details
  - 3.1. Complaint Handling
  - 3.2. Exclusions: What BCLT does not consider to be a complaint
  - 3.3. Complaints about individuals and colleagues
  - 3.4. General Feedback, escalation and time frames
  - 3.5. Putting things right
  - 3.6. Complaints Performance
4. Contact Details

### 1. Policy Statement / Purpose

Bristol Community Land Trust (BCLT) works to offer a fair and high-quality service to all our members, residents, and other stakeholders. As part of improving this service, we welcome and value your feedback, be that positive or negative. We take all forms of feedback seriously and use the information to monitor our performance and adapt what we do and how we do it.

As a small registered provider, we recognize that some of the services provided by larger organisations are more difficult for us to offer. However, as a membership organisation, in which all residents are members, we can provide a level of direct involvement and transparency that is unavailable to larger organisations. In all instances, the most senior member of staff will take on the responsibility of complaints officer detailed in this policy.

We know sometimes things don't go according to plan and that you may wish to make a complaint against BCLT. We will address your complaint in line with this policy and make every effort to resolve your issue in a timely manner.

## 1.1 Defining types of requests and feedback

BCLT recognizes that there are different types of requests and feedback that can be made. A brief definition of the main three is given below:

1. Service request: A request requiring action to put something right.
2. Feedback: A description of an experience or outcome.
3. Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction.

To expand these definitions:

1. Service request: A request for action to be taken to put something right. The individual raising the request should be given a clear idea of the actions that will be taken and the timeframe this will happen within.
2. Feedback: Information, that can include a comment or suggestion, given to BCLT that does not require action to be taken but should feed into a review process for organisational learning. This feedback should be recorded and reviewed by senior management on a regular basis.
3. Complaint: BCLT has adopted the Housing Ombudsman's full definition of a complaint as the following - *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents'*

Points to keep in mind:

- The word 'complaint' doesn't have to be used for it to be treated as such.
- A complaint can be made verbally or in writing (via letter, email, or through our resident forum)
- Complaints made through a survey are not treated as such, however surveys should include details of how to make a complaint
- A complaint can be made of a response to a service request while the request is still open and being addressed.
- All complaints are treated equally, whether they come from a member, resident, or stakeholder.

BCLT recognises that individuals may require reasonable adjustments to be made for them to make service requests, provide feedback, or lodge a complaint. An offer to make adjustments specific to the neurological, mental, and physical needs of the individual will be made at the point of first contact, this includes being accompanied or represented by another person.

## 2. Legal and Regulatory Compliant

This policy is based on the Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code and dispute resolution principles – be fair, put things right and learn from outcomes.

We have adopted the principles of the code and updated this policy in line with the revised complaint handling code launched in April 2024.

## 3. Policy Detail

### 3.1 Complaint Handling

BCLT is a Community Benefit Society with a small operating team. All complaints are handled and managed by the member of the team who first receives the complaint, with oversight from the Chair of the Board as Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC), with support from other trustees.

All team members have a responsibility to resolve a complaint within the timescales contained within this policy.

### 3.2 Exclusions: What BCLT does not consider to be a complaint

BCLT will review all complaints on an individual basis and won't take a standard approach. There are a number of reasons why we won't accept a complaint, but these would be made clear to the individual making the complaint and they would be given the chance to appeal this decision.

This policy outlines the following conditions in which a complaint would not normally be accepted:

- a. The complaint concerns a first-time request for a routine service. This may be a repair or request for information.
- b. A complaint about the outcome of a previous complaint which had been resolved and a final decision having been made.
- c. A complaint received when legal proceedings have started relating to a claim for alleged disrepair/housing condition.
- d. Complaints relating to any personal injury or third-party liability claims, as these will be dealt with by insurers.
- e. If a complaint has been made about an incident that occurred over 12 months prior to the complaint being made. This does not mean that the complaint won't be upheld but that BCLT will have discretion in this case.

If a complaint is rejected by BCLT, either prior or after an appeal, the individual raising the complaint will be made aware of this and can challenge this decision by escalating the matter internally at BCLT or by bringing the matter to the Housing Ombudsman.

### 3.3 Complaints about individuals and colleagues

Complaints about specific colleagues will be reviewed by a senior manager and will, if required, be raised with the board of trustees for investigation and review.

If the complaint is raised to the board of trustees, the individual making the complaint will be informed of this but no further information will be provided in line with the Data Protection Act of 2018.

### 3.4 General feedback, escalation and time frames

General feedback, including service requests, will be managed and actioned by the BCLT contact who receives the feedback. The individual making the complaint will be asked if any reasonable adjustments are required in order for them to engage with the complaints process, any disclosed disabilities will be recorded and reviewed until the complaint is closed.

If the action taken is not satisfactory, the feedback or service request can be escalated to a senior manager. This escalation can form a complaint if required. Details of BCLT's complaints process and how to contact the Ombudsman will be given at the earliest opportunity.

Complaints are handled by following the Stage 1 and Stage 2 processes detailed below. BCLT will require all third parties to handle complaints in line with these stages.

#### Stage 1 Complaint

The complaint and any additional information is recorded and the individual making the complaint is sent an acknowledgement within 5 working days. The acknowledgement outlines a summary of 'the complaint definition' which includes: the complaint as understood by BCLT, a request for clarification (if required), the main contact at BCLT, the resolution being sought, and gives details on how they can access the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The acknowledgement will also identify who will be carrying out the investigation and who is responsible for providing a response within 10 working days.

It is possible for additional comments to be made regarding the complaint at any stage of the investigation process and the individual responsible for investigating the complaint should work closely with the individual making the complaint to make sure they understand the situation in full.

Where further work is required, an agreed schedule should be provided that details what will happen and by which date. Extensions to these dates can be given, as long as these are clearly communicated and are within a reasonable length of time. BCLT will also provide details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

If the individual is not satisfied with the outcomes at the end of Stage 1, they have 15 days to request an escalation to Stage 2.

#### Stage 2 Complaint

The complaint and any additional information is recorded and provided to the chair of the board, as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC).

The MRC will hold the responsibility for handling the complaint or, when this is unworkable, they can designate another trustee to take on the responsibility.

The individual making the complaint is sent an acknowledgement within 5 working days. The acknowledgement outlines a summary of 'the complaint definition' which includes: the complaint as understood by BCLT, a request for clarification (if required), the main contact at BCLT, the resolution being sought, and gives details on how they can access the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Where further work is required, an agreed schedule should be provided that details what will happen and by which date. Extensions to these dates can be given, as long as these are clearly communicated and are within a reasonable length of time, normally not exceeding 10 days from the original date. We will also provide details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Before any stage 2 decisions are made, the trustee should give the individual raising the complaint the opportunity to comment.

The outcomes and final decision will then be communicated within 20 working days while acknowledging that Stage 2 is the final internal stage for complaints at BCLT.

If the individual is not satisfied with this outcome from Stage 2 they are given details for how to take up the matter with either:

1. A 'designated person' such as their local MP or councilor
2. The Housing Ombudsman

### 3.5 Putting things right

BCLT will work to put things right as soon as possible once a complaint is received. Any remedy will reflect the impact on the resident as well as the issue(s) raised in the complaint. Examples of outcomes from a complaint include:

- Apologising.
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong.
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons.
- Taking action if there has been delay.
- Reconsidering or changing a decision.
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum.
- Providing a financial remedy.
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

### 3.6 Complaints Performance

When we reach the end of a complaints process, either Stage 1 or Stage 2, BCLT will record the outcomes on our complaints log. This record will also hold information on the origin of the complaint, the date received, all correspondence with the individual who made the complaint and any other parties, and all supporting documents.

Complaints are monitored and reported to the board or trustees on a quarterly basis. If this reporting highlights a specific area of concern, trustees can request a policy or service review.

BCLT will manage and monitor complaints against the service standards and will publish performance, alongside this policy document, on its website.

- a. The annual 'complaints performance and service improvement' report will include:  
A review of BCLT process against the Housing Ombudsman 'self-assessment form'.
- b. An analysis of BCLTs complaint handling performance, including a summary of the types of complaints that have been refused.
- c. Any findings of non-compliance and any reports from the Ombudsman.

## 4. Contact Details

### Contact us at BCLT

You can contact us in any of the following ways:

- Phone: 07421127279
- Email: [info@bristolclt.co.uk](mailto:info@bristolclt.co.uk)
- Write to: Bristol CLT Ltd., c/o United Communities, Eden House, 10 Eastgate Office Park, Eastgate Road, Bristol BS5 6XX

### Contact the Housing Ombudsman

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman in any of the following ways, although preference is for use of the online form and email:

- Complaint form: Fill in the [online complaint form](#)
- Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Phone: [0300 111 3000](tel:03001113000)
- Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET