

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Northwest Jewish Housing Association (NWJHA) is committed to the provision of a high-quality service to all of our customers, and every member of staff is responsible for delivering that service.
- 1.2 We welcome complaints, comments, suggestions and compliments and we use customer feedback as an opportunity to learn about what we are doing well and where we need to improve. This helps us to improve the services we deliver.
- 1.3 All complaints are managed in line with data protection legislation and our Equality and Diversity policy.
- 1.4 It is noted that when the term 'working day' is used, this refers to any day on which the office is open. This does not include any days which fall on closures due to Bank Holidays or Jewish High Holy days.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers occasions when residents or applicants are dissatisfied with the level or type of service they have received and wish to make a complaint, whether formally or informally.
- 2.2 This policy is invoked for any appeals against housing decisions when an applicant or resident believes that they have not been given the correct level of priority or banding, or if their application or nomination is refused.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 To have a process in place that is clear, simple and accessible so complaints are resolved promptly, consistently and fairly, in compliance with all regulatory and statutory requirements.

4. Defining a complaint

- 4.1 Following the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code in September 2020, a complaint is universally defined as:
"An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents."
- 4.2 A service request is a request from a resident to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests should be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. If further enquiries are needed following a service request in order to resolve the matter or if a resident requests it the issue must be logged as a complaint.
- 4.3 An enquiry is when a customer contacts us to ask about something concerning their home or tenancy. For example, a customer might ask for information about their rent account, or to query or clarify something on their rent statement. This is not a complaint. If we fail to provide or clarify this information, then this could become a complaint.

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- 4.4 A comment or suggestion is when a customer expresses an idea or opinion on an aspect of their home, tenancy, or in relation to the wider day-to-day running of NWJHA. This is not a complaint. If we fail to acknowledge or respond to a comment or suggestion with respect, then this could become a complaint.
- 4.5 Staff are trained to recognise the difference between a complaint, service request, enquiry and a comment/ suggestion. Staff are encouraged to take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for residents as early as possible.
- 4.6 We will ensure that customers are aware of how we are deciding to record any of the above, and ensure that they are in agreement with this.
- 4.7 There are a number of exceptions to when we will not initialise the Complaint procedure and these are:
- The issue of the complaint occurred over twelve months ago (where the problem is a recurring issue, NWJHA will consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the resident). This will not be the case where there is a safeguarding or health & safety issue.
 - The matter has already been considered under the complaints policy.
 - A resident complains about the behaviour of another resident. This may be dealt with under NWJHA's anti-social behaviour policy. This policy is available on our website at www.mjha.org.uk or you can request a copy by contacting us on 0161 740 0001 or by email at hello@mjha.org.uk. If the matter has not been acted upon or if the resident is unhappy with the way the matter has been dealt with, then this would be logged as a complaint.
 - A resident complains about their level of rent and service charge e.g., they are unhappy with the amount of increase rather than believing it has been incorrectly calculated.
 - The issue is subject to legal action or to an enforcement notice or other statutory notice.
 - Compensation claims for damage to personal property or personal injury. Where appropriate these will be dealt with directly or through insurers.
 - Several related complaints are made which would be more effectively dealt with together rather than on an individual basis. However, in this instance the complaints will be logged, although the policy timescales may not apply depending upon the components to be investigated.
 - If a complainant is rude or non-co-operative during the complaint's procedure. In this case the Unreasonable and Persistent policy would be referred to.
 - Complaints about employee conduct that require the involvement of the HR & Resources Manager. The outcome of any internal investigation will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to the customer, in line with data protection.

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We consider these exclusions to be fair and reasonable to residents.

- 4.8 If we decide not to accept a complaint the reasoning for this decision will be logged and evidenced as to the reasoning for this decision.
- 4.9 If we decide not to accept a complaint, an explanation will be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell us to take on the complaint.
- 4.10 NWJHA reserves the right to refuse to deal with complaints, or to deal with them differently, if they are pursued unreasonably or could be handled more effectively in a different manner.
- 4.11 Additionally, a complaint will not be re-opened at the complainant's request if, after review by NWJHA, it is established that no new evidence relevant to the complaint has been provided.

5. Policy Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 We aim to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible. NWJHA wishes to ensure that at each stage of the complaint, it is dealt with objectively and that we apologise where NWJHA is at fault. We will compensate people in line with our compensation policy where it is warranted.
- 5.2 We aim to respond formally to all complaints in writing within 10 working days of a complaint being received. Where a resident/applicant remains dissatisfied with the service, they can ask for a review by the appropriate Manager, Director, or where applicable, the Chief Executive.