

## Complaints Policy (Housing)

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Complaints Policy (Housing)
<b>Version:</b>	V.1
<b>Approved by:</b>	<i>The Board of Management and Trustees</i>
<b>Approved date:</b>	17th November 2025
<b>Next review date:</b>	17th November 2026
<b>Key Legislation and Regulations:</b>	<p>Housing Act 1996 Charities Act 2011 Equality Act 2010 Data Protection Act 2018 &amp; UK GDPR Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code</p> <p>Oakfield aligns with sector leaders adopting a tenant-focused, transparent, and learning-driven approach to complaints.</p>
<b>Relevant Policies:</b>	<p>Whistleblowing Risk Management Data Protection EDI</p>
<b>EA:</b>	Equality Analysis is currently under review
<b>DPIA:</b>	DPIA is currently under review
<b>Consultation:</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Applies to:</b>	All Tenants, employees and volunteers

### 1. Policy Statement

At Oakfield (Easton Maudit) Ltd, we believe that listening to feedback—especially when things go wrong—is essential to building trust and improving our services. We are committed to resolving complaints fairly, promptly, and respectfully, and to using every complaint as an opportunity to learn and grow.

We recognise that complaints may arise from dissatisfaction with our services, decisions, or conduct, and we aim to address these concerns in a way that reflects our values of dignity, inclusion, and accountability.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Tenants and leaseholders
- Their families, carers, and advocates
- Oakfield staff, volunteers, and trustees
- Contractors and service providers
- Community stakeholders and members of the public

It covers complaints relating to:

- Housing and support services
- Staff or volunteer conduct
- Communication and decision-making
- Anti-social behaviour affecting tenants or the wider community
- Any aspect of Oakfield's operations that causes dissatisfaction or concern

### **3. What Is a Complaint?**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about:

- Something Oakfield has done or failed to do
- The way a service was delivered
- Delays, poor communication, or unmet expectations
- Staff or volunteer behaviour
- Decisions made by Oakfield that impact individuals or communities

Complaints may be made verbally, in writing, or through a representative. We treat all complaints seriously, whether informal or formal.

### **4. Complaints Procedure**

Oakfield follows a clear three-stage process:

- Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

Complainants are encouraged to raise concerns directly with the relevant staff member or service area. Many issues can be resolved quickly through open dialogue and mutual understanding.

- Stage 2 – Formal Complaint

If informal resolution is not possible, a formal complaint may be submitted verbally or in writing. It will be:

- Acknowledged within 3 working days
- Investigated by a designated officer
- Responded to within 10 working days (or longer if necessary, with updates provided)
- Stage 3 – Escalation

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the matter may be escalated to:

- The Managing Director
- The Board of Trustees (for governance-related concerns)

A final written response will be provided, outlining the findings and any actions taken.

### **5. Confidentiality and Respect**

Oakfield handles all complaints with discretion and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. We treat complainants with respect and expect the same in return.

Unreasonable, abusive, or threatening behaviour may result in:

- Restricted contact arrangements
- Referral to safeguarding or legal authorities
- Suspension of communication pending review

## 6. Appeals and External Review

If a complainant is not satisfied with Oakfield's internal process, they may seek external resolution through:

- Housing Ombudsman Service - for tenancy-related complaints
- Regulator of Social Housing - for service standards and governance issues
- Charity Commission - for concerns about trustee conduct or charitable compliance

Oakfield will cooperate fully with any external investigation and implement recommendations where appropriate.


## 7. Learning

Oakfield views complaints as a vital source of insight. We will:

- Record all complaints in a secure system
- Track outcomes and response times
- Report regularly to the Board of Trustees
- Identify trends and areas for improvement
- Share learning across teams to enhance service delivery

## 8. Monitoring and Review

- Complaint reports are logged by senior management and reviewed regularly by the Managing Director
- The Board receives anonymised summaries of concerns and outcomes
- This policy is reviewed annually or following significant incidents or legislative changes

<b>Signed - Chair of Trustees:</b>	
<b>Print:</b>	Mrs Sara Morrison
<b>Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2025