



WFHA Complaints and Compliments Policy

Appendix one: Overview and Procedure

Overview

The complaint and compliment procedure set out below is in line with WFHA's service standards and the Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.

Our complaints information including our policy, procedure, our Ombudsman self-assessment, Complaints Handling Statement and access to the Housing Ombudsman website are all available on our website.

Our tenants are advised that they can speak with any member of staff about any concern, and we aim to resolve the matter at this point if possible. If it is not resolved, the matter will be passed to our Head of Service who will investigate formally as noted within our complaint's procedure, below.

A person does not have to use the word "complaint" for it to be treated as such. Whenever a tenant expresses their dissatisfaction, WFHA will ask if the person would like to make a complaint.

Complaints about our contactors or a third party will be managed by WFHA through our complaint's procedure.

Each complaint will be considered on its own merit.

When would we not consider a complaint?

WFHA will not refuse to investigate or escalate a complaint unless there is a valid reason to do so.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, an explanation will be provided setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and that the person making the complaint has the right to take that decision to the Housing Ombudsman.

If the Housing Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the complaint will be investigated.

We will not consider complaints:

- where legal proceedings have begun;
- complaints over 12 months old unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- matters that have previously been considered under WFHA's complaints policy.

The Housing Ombudsman Service

Tenants have the right to approach the Ombudsman for independent review at any time, at:

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

WFHA Complaints and Compliments Procedure

Compliments		
1.0	Compliments	
	1.1	Compliments procedure
	1.1.1	You can compliment us by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- sending us an email to info@wfha.org.uk- sending us a letter to our offices at Libro Court, 2A Larkswood Road, Chingford E4 9DY;- telephone us on 020 8524 6987;- in person.
	1.1.2	An acknowledgment will be sent within five working days, thanking the person for their compliment.
	1.1.3	Compliments are recorded on our complaints and compliments log by our Operations Co-ordinator.
	1.1.4	The compliment is given to the relevant staff member or third party (e.g. contractor).
2.0	Complaints procedure summary	
	2.1	How to contact us
	2.1.1	There are several ways to contact us to make a complaint, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- sending an email to our dedicated complaints inbox at complaints@wfha.org.uk or info@wfha.org.uk

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sending a letter to our offices at Libro Court, 2A Larkswood Road, Chingford E4 9DY; - telephone us on 020 8524 6987; - speak to us in person.
3.0	Who can make a complaint		
	3.1	Anyone (i.e. tenants, tenant’s representatives, stakeholders, contractors, neighbours etc.) can complain about any act or omission by WFHA that has disadvantaged an individual or group.	
	3.2	Tenants can ask a representative to help them during the process, for example, a family member, a friend, or local MP. If so, consent will need to be provided so that WFHA staff are able to deal directly with the representative to ensure data protection law is adhered to.	
4.0	Complaints and Service Requests explained		
	4.1	<p>We comply with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code, which requires us to distinguish the difference between a service request (a request for us to manage a new issue) and a service failure (a where we have failed to deliver a service satisfactorily).</p> <p>These are explained below:</p>	
	4.2	Service Requests	
		4.2.1	<p>If you contact us for the first time about something that is not working properly in your home or is affecting your ability to live in your home peacefully, we will manage this as a service request by getting the issue fixed or support you to address the issue.</p> <p>However, if you tell us you are dissatisfied when talking to us about a service request, you will be asked if you would like to raise the matter as a complaint.</p>
	4.3	Complaints	
		4.3.1	<p>If you contact us because we have let you down by not delivering the level of service, you expect, we will manage it as a complaint.</p> <p>Both service requests and complaints are recorded within our complaints and compliments log.</p> <p>The stages are recorded, and the outcomes published annually to our Board and the information is included within our annual report. Available on our website or as a printed version which aides learning, transparency and to ensure compliance.</p>
5.0	Complaints Procedure		
	5.1	Initial assessment	

	5.1.1	<p>WFHA have a two stage complaints process and we will consider a complaint as soon as possible once received.</p> <p>When the person who is making the complaint does so, we ask that they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The reason for their complaint - What they would like for us to do to put things right. <p>For complaints which require further investigation, we may need more time. We will consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the person is vulnerable or at risk or if we need to make reasonable adjustments as detailed within the Equality Act 2010 (as noted in the Complaints and Compliments Policy).</p>
	5.2	Acknowledging a complaint – 5 working days
	5.2.1	<p>Once we have received a complaint, we will acknowledge it in writing within 5 working days. The acknowledgment will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - outline the reason for the complaint; - confirm the issues or areas we will be investigating; - confirm to the person who is making the complaint what they would like for us to do to put things right; - confirm if there are any areas that WFHA are not responsible for.
	5.2.2	If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will ask for more information which may include documents or photos.
	5.2.3	The details will be added to our complaints log.
	5.3	Stage one – investigation and response managed by the Head of Service
	5.3.1	Following the acknowledgment, our Head of Service has 10 working days to complete our investigation and to respond with an outcome.
	5.3.2	Usually, the investigation will be completed within 10 working days although the process may take longer in rare circumstances. If this happens, an extension of time to investigate will be needed which must not be longer than a further 10 working days without good reason. If this is the case, we will let the person who is making the complaint know why and confirm a timeframe for a response.
	5.3.3	At this stage, we will let the person who is making the complaint know of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman.
	5.3.4	If an additional complaint is made during the investigation, this may be incorporated into the Stage 1 complaint if it is related and the response has not been issued. If the Stage 1 complaint is closed and/or 28 days have passed, this will be treated as a new complaint and logged on our complaints log.

		5.3.5	<p>After the investigation is complete, we will write to the person making the complaint and our response will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the complaint stage; - the complaint definition; - the decision of the complaint; - the reasons for any decisions made; - any service failure that has occurred; - details of any remedy or solution offered to put things right; - details of any outstanding actions; - details of how the complaint has led to any changes in the way we deliver services if applicable; - details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the person making the complaint is dissatisfied with the response;
		5.3.6	Our complaints log will be updated.
		5.3.7	The person making the complaint has 28 days from receipt of our response to let us know if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint and if they want to escalate the matter to Stage 2. If we do not hear from them after 28 days, the complaint will be closed, and the complaints log will be updated.
	5.4	Stage two – review and response managed by the Director of Service	
		5.4.1	If the person who has made complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they can progress it to stage 2, this is WFHA's final response. To do this, they must contact us within 28 days of our Stage 1 response.
		5.4.2	<p>An acknowledgement must be sent within 5 working days of receipt of the escalation and should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - confirm the complaint definition; - outline the reason for the complaint; - confirm the issues or areas we will be investigating; - confirm if there are any areas that WFHA are not responsible for.
		5.4.3	The request for escalation will be included within the complaints log.
		5.4.4	<p>The person making the complaint does not have to explain their reasons for their request to escalate to Stage 2.</p> <p>WFHA are expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why they remain dissatisfied as part of our Stage 2 response.</p>
		5.4.5	Our final stage 2 response must be issued within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
		5.4.6	Usually, the investigation will be completed within 20 working days although the process may take longer in rare circumstances. If this happens, an

			extension of time to investigate will be needed which must not be longer than a further 20 working days with good reason. If this is the case, we will let the person who is making the complaint know why and confirm a timeframe for a response.
		5.4.7	At this stage, we will let the person who is making the complaint know of their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman.
		5.4.8	<p>After the investigation is complete, we will write to the person making the complaint within 20 days, and our response will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the complaint stage; - the complaint definition; - the decision of the complaint; - the reasons for any decisions made; - reference to relevant policies, procedures, law and good practice where appropriate - any service failure; - details of any remedy or solution offered to put things right; - details of any outstanding actions; - details of how the complaint has led to any changes in the way we deliver services if applicable; - details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if they remain dissatisfied with the response.