

Complaints and Compliments Policy

Who does this policy apply to:	This Policy applies to all tenants, service users, staff, visitors and board members
Review Date (minimum every three years)	This policy will be subject to a review in February 2027
Policy Author/Reviewer and Job Title	Michael Pughsley – Director of Housing

POLICY

Purpose and Scope of the Policy:

Some of the decisions WFHA makes have a real impact on the lives of our tenants, other members of the household, and other people affected by our housing or services. Therefore, we want to ensure that decisions are fair and reasonable.

We are aware that from time to time, mistakes happen.

We are also aware that the services we deliver are of good quality and sometimes we are complimented for these services which we equally value.

Anyone can complain about any act or omission by WFHA that has disadvantaged an individual or group. This policy does not cover complaints that become involved in a legal process, for example, a legal disrepair case reported through a solicitor or legal action taken by the association against a tenant to enforce the terms of a tenancy agreement.

The association has a positive approach to receiving complaints and sees them as an important way of receiving direct feedback from anyone making a complaint. WFHA will use the information to assess performance and inform the review of policies, procedures and services.

We will not refer to anyone as a 'complainant' or 'complainer' but instead as a 'person making a complaint'.

The aims of the policy are to:

- deliver a complaints service in line with the association's service standards and the Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code;
- facilitate learning and change;
- ensure a "first time right" approach;
- ensure that everyone can be heard easily, fairly and quickly;
- make the process simple and accessible;
- work with partners and other agencies to coordinate effective outcomes;
- manage all complaints in an open and accountable way.
- Learn from complaints and compliments to improve our services.

Policy Definitions:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the association, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual tenant or group of tenants.

The law and regulation have an impact on how the association implements its complaints policy and we will continue to review the policy in line with any changes in these.

A complaint or a compliment can be raised in all areas of the services we deliver, such as repairs, housing, finance. WFHA will not refuse to investigate or escalate a complaint.

Complaints may be about but are not limited to:

- A failure by the Association to meet its legal duty as a landlord;
- A feeling of being treated unfairly or affected negatively by the Association's policies and procedures;
- That the Association has not interpreted its rules properly or has failed to act efficiently;
- A member of staff or a representative of the Association has behaved improperly or has been discourteous.

The association will deal with complaints, as with all interactions, objectively and professionally.

Service requests are made to rectify things that may be wrong. Whilst these are not complaints, WFHA will track them and the remedies promised to anyone making the request. Anyone expressing dissatisfaction for example in a service request will be offered the opportunity to raise their concerns as a complaint.

A third party may help or represent someone making a complaint. WFHA will treat this in the same way as any other complaint having regard to its duties under the law to protect the data of individuals.

Tenants at any stage have the right to approach the Housing Ombudsman with their complaint at:

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Tel: 03001113000

We also like to hear if the services we deliver are of good quality. Any compliment received will be forwarded to the relevant staff member/team. We will celebrate and learn from these to keep improving our services.

Reasonable adjustments

The association will consider requests for reasonable adjustments providing they meet the criteria set out in the Equality Act 2010 as follows:

- Where there is a provision, criterion or practice which puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled;
- Where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons that are not disabled;
- Examples of reasonable adjustment would be ensuring that the provision of information is available in alternative formats, for example large print, braille or coloured paper, extension of time limits, agreed

to a preferred method of communication.

The Equality Act 2010 does not define what is reasonable. Guidance from the Human Rights Commission advised that the following key factors are considered:

- The effectiveness of the reasonable adjustment
- The practicality of the association making those adjustments
- The availability of resources including external assistance and finance
- Any disruption to the service making the adjustment may cause

Learning and Change

We can learn from both complaints and compliments to improve and enhance our services.

We monitor all our complaints to ensure that they are being resolved fairly, effectively and promptly. Putting things right is a priority and so in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2022, WFHA will operate a 2-stage-only process to shorten the time taken to resolve any issue.

We will identify any patterns from the types of complaints or compliments we receive. If these trends suggest a need for change, that will be addressed quickly by the Senior Leadership Team.

WFHA will comply with government's Consumer Standards and ensure that our process is simple and accessible and that any learning is shared with tenants as well as the Board.

Monitoring and reporting

Satisfaction is a key measure of our performance and a positive approach is taken to learning. We use feedback to shape training, inform policy and procedure reviews and improve the tenant experience.

The Board will receive an analysis annually detailing the number and type of complaints received as well as any learning and consequent changes to the service. We also deliver this analysis to our tenants in our annual report.

We collect equality statistics to help ensure that no one is treated unfairly.

Publication

This policy, the procedure and an easy read guide are available to all tenants and published on our website together with contact details of the Housing Ombudsman. Tenants are advised of this when they sign tenancy agreements.

Related Policies and regulatory documents:

Vexatious Complaints

Equality

Safeguarding

Health and Safety

Home loss and compensation

Anti-social behaviour

Domestic Violence

Data Protection

Tenancy Guidance

Aids and Adaptations

Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2022

Equality Act 2010

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

Consumer Standards 2024

Equality Impact Statement:

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. We will not discriminate against any person on any grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity policy.

Document History:

Date of Last Review: *May 2024*


Date of Review: February 2027



WFHA Policy Equality Impact Assessment Form

1.0	Name of the policy being assessed	Complaints and Compliments Policy		
2.0	Is this a new policy or a revision?	Revision		
3.0	Person responsible for assessment	Michael Pughsley		
4.0	Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy	<p>This policy is designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver a complaints service in line with the associations service standards; • facilitate learning and change; • ensure a “first time right” approach; • ensure that everyone can be heard easily, fairly and quickly; • make the process simple and accessible; • work with partners and other agencies to coordinate effective outcomes; • manage all complaints in an open and accountable way. • Learn from complaints and compliments to improve our services. 		
5.0	What outcomes are wanted from this policy i.e. benefits for our tenants	To receive direct feedback from tenants; assess performance and inform the review of policies, procedures and services; ensure equity; manage gaps in expectation; provide learning for staff.		
6.0	Does the policy affect any of the protected	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">No</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	No
Yes	No			

	characteristics as noted below? If yes, tick those that apply:	YES				If no, go straight to section 10.0				
7.0	What protected characteristics could be effected by this policy:	Age	Marriage or civil partnerships	Disability	Race	Pregnancy / Maternity	Gender	Religion or belief	Gender Reassignment	Sexual Orientation
		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8.0	Describe the likely impacts of the policy could have upon the protected characteristic group/s	Since complaints or compliments can be made in relation to, or by anyone with, any of the protected characteristics, it is possible that a lack of understanding by staff may adversely affect the outcome of a response. Equally, an inability to balance the rights of individuals and the needs of the organisation in addressing complaints may not be adequately addressed, taking into account the known characteristics of the person making the complaint.								
9.0	What actions are required to address the impacts arising from this assessment. <i>(This may include collecting additional data, putting monitoring in place, specific actions to mitigate negative actions etc.)</i>	Up to date diversity data is important in order to achieve the above. This should be consulted alongside the implementation of the complaints procedure to ensure household members' needs are taken into account when responding. Regular training for staff will be maintained in inclusion and diversity.								
10.0	Upon the completion of points 1.0 to 9.0, please complete the information below:									

	Name	Michael Pughsley
	Job title	Director of Housing
	Signed	
	Date this Equality Impact Assessment was completed	May 2024
	Please attach the completed document as an appendix the policy.	

