

Cassiltoun

Housing Association

COMPLAINTS PROCESS
OCTOBER 2018

Section	Contents	Page
1.	Introduction	3
2.	Definition of a Complaint	3
3.	How to Complain	
4.	Complaint Procedure Stages	3
5.	Receiving a Complaint	3
6.	Frontline Resolution	4
7.	Investigation Stage	5
8.	External Review Stage	5
Appendix 1	Complaints Process Flowchart	6

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cassiltoun Housing Association is committed to providing high-quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. This document outlines the process by which complaints are handled by Cassiltoun Housing Association (CHA) and its staff, how to make a complaint and the service standards tenants' can expect from the Association.

This complaints handling process should be read in conjunction with the Staff Guidance on Complaint Handling which defines, in greater detail, roles and responsibilities as well as 8 Corporate Appendixes which support our process. The Complaints Policy and Procedure should also be taken into account when handling complaints.

2.0 DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

2.1 A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about CHA's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of CHA.

A complaint can be about:-

- Delays in responding to enquiries and requests
- Failure to provide a service
- Standard of service
- Dissatisfaction with CHA Policy
- Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- Failure to follow proper procedure.

A complaint may involve more than one of CHA's services or be about someone working on behalf of CHA.

2.2 There are some things which cannot be dealt with through our complaints procedure. These include:-

- A routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti social behaviour
- Requests for compensation
- Our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against that decision.
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our **final** decision following stage 2 investigation. If you are still not satisfied you can ask the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help resolve a person's concerns that information and advice will be provided.

3.0 HOW TO COMPLAIN

Anyone can make a complaint to CHA, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with the service provided by or on behalf of CHA.

A complaint can be made in person, by telephone, in writing, e-mail or using our complaints form.

A complaint should be made immediately in order that it can be rectified quickly and effectively. However, should be made no later than 6 months after the event that is being complained about or finding that there is a reason to complaint, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

When complaining the following information is required:-

- Full name and address of person complaining
- As much information as possible regarding the complaint
- What has gone wrong
- How the matter can be resolved .

4.0 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE STAGES

4.1 CHA Complaints Procedure is comprised of two internal stages, a Frontline Resolution (Stage 1) and an Investigation (Stage 2).

4.2 When the two internal stages of the Complaints Procedure have been exhausted staff will instruct the customer that they can contact the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) or Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) whichever is the most appropriate who may carry out an external independent review of the customer's complaint.

4.3 Where a member of staff receives a complaint which they are unable to resolve immediately, the complaint is passed to the appropriate Housing Manager (HM) or Regeneration Manager (RM) for complaints related to the Regeneration Department for assessment and may if appropriate be escalated immediately to the Investigation Stage.

5.0 RECEIVING A COMPLAINT

5.1 Complaints will be accepted by any member of staff and can be written or verbal. Complaints received in all instances must be forwarded to HM, or RM. A Complaints Process Flowchart is attached as Appendix 1.

5.2 Staff will aim to resolve straightforward customer complaints quickly and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. If the complaint is able to be immediately resolved by the staff member then this should be done at the Frontline Resolution stage.

5.3 If the staff member is unable to resolve the complaint immediately then the complaint will be forwarded to the HM, or RM who will allocate the complaint to a relevant officer for investigation.

5.4 Where an expression of dissatisfaction concerns a routine request for a service, this will not be considered under the complaints handling procedure and should be directed to the appropriate officer (please see paragraph 2.2).

- 5.5 Where an expression of dissatisfaction involves a request for compensation only, this will not be considered under the complaint handling procedure and will be dealt with in reference to CHA's Compensation Policy. (paragraph 2.2)
- 5.6 Any attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a previous complaint reconsidered where CHA's definitive decision has been communicated following stage two of the Complaints Procedure cannot be considered. Customers in this instance should be directed to the SPSO. (paragraph 2.2)

6.0 FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

- 6.1 The initial stage in the Complaints Procedure is Frontline Resolution which seeks to resolve a complaint immediately, or within a five working day timescale.
- 6.2 Any complaint received needs to be recorded. If a complaint is made verbally by a customer then the details of the complaint will be recorded by staff on a Verbal Complaint Form (VCF) (see appendix 2 of Staff Guidance).

6.3 Immediate Resolution

- 6.3.1 Where a complaint has been resolved immediately staff will record the details of the complaint on a VCF.
- 6.3.2 Staff will also record the outcome of the complaint and any action taken on a VCF.
- 6.3.3 Staff will confirm to the customer the actions taken or to be taken and where appropriate will confirm this in writing to the customer.
- 6.3.4 Staff will also advise the customer that if they remain dissatisfied then they can have their complaint reviewed by the HM. The customer will also be advised that CHA record all complaints in order to allow learning from complaints which will improve the services CHA provide.
- 6.3.5 Staff will send a copy of the complaint and outcome to HM or RM.

6.4 Five Working Day Resolution

- 6.4.1 Where a complaint cannot be resolved immediately then staff will advise the customer that the details of their complaint will be recorded, a full response will be sent to them within five working days and that if necessary their complaint can be escalated for a HM to investigate.
- 6.4.2 If a complaint is received verbally, staff will record the details of the complaint on a VCF and then forward the completed VCF to HM or RM.
- 6.4.3 Where appropriate, HM or RM will write to the customer within three working days to acknowledge their complaint.
- 6.4.4 HM or RM will assess the complaint for risk (see Appendix 3 of Staff Guidance), identify an appropriate Investigating Officer and issue all relevant paperwork.

- 6.4.5 The Investigating Officer will carry out an investigation into the complaint and respond in writing to the customer within five working days. Any response communicated to the customer will include information on the next stage in the complaints procedure, should the customer remain dissatisfied.
- 6.4.6 If the complaint cannot be resolved within five working days then an extension of a further five working days may be agreed with the customer and authorised by a HM or RM. This should only be granted in exceptional circumstances and only if it will facilitate a resolution of the complaint at the Frontline Resolution stage (see appendix 4 of Staff Guidance). HM or RM will confirm any extension in writing to the customer.
- 6.4.7 The Investigating Officer will forward copies of all final paperwork, including the outcome of the complaint to the HM or RM.

7.0 INVESTIGATION STAGE

- 7.1 Where it has not been possible to resolve a complaint at Stage 1 - Frontline Resolution, or where a customer remains dissatisfied then staff will advise DoO that the complaint is to be escalated to the Investigation Stage.
- 7.2 DoO acknowledge the escalation of the complaint to stage two of the Complaints Procedure in writing to the customer within three working days of receipt and advise that an investigation into the complaint will be carried out and a response to their complaint will be communicated within a twenty working days timescale.
- 7.3 DoO will identify an appropriate investigating officer and provide details of the complaint and all paperwork from stage one to the relevant officer.
- 7.4 The officer carries out a thorough investigation into the customer's complaint, including a review of actions taken at stage one and interviews with relevant staff members and the customer where appropriate. A response to the complaint will be communicated to the customer within twenty working days.
- 7.5 If the complaint cannot be resolved within twenty working days due to extenuating circumstances or operational difficulties, or where the complaint involves very complex issues (see Appendix 4 of Staff Guidance), an extension to timescales may be authorised. This should be discussed with the customer and authorised by the DoO. The DoO should set the time limits on any extended investigation.
- 7.6 The customer must be kept updated on the reason for the delay and give them a revised timescale for completion. DoO will confirm any extension to the timescale in writing to the customer.
- 7.7 The investigating officer will have the complaint signed off by DoO before the response is issued to the customer. The response must include advice to the customer of their right to contact the SPSO or FOS to undertake an independent external review of their complaint.
- 7.8 The investigating officer will forward copies of all final paperwork, including the letter notifying the customer of the outcome of the complaint, to DoO.

8.0 EXTERNAL REVIEW STAGE

8.1 Where it has not been possible to resolve a complaint at the Investigation stage, or where a customer remains dissatisfied, the customer will be advised that they can take their complaint to the SPSO/FOS who would undertake an independent external review of their complaint. Details of the appropriate Ombudsman will be included and if applicable a copy of the FOS leaflet “Your Complaint and the Ombudsman” will be sent to the customer. This represents the final stage in the complaints procedure.

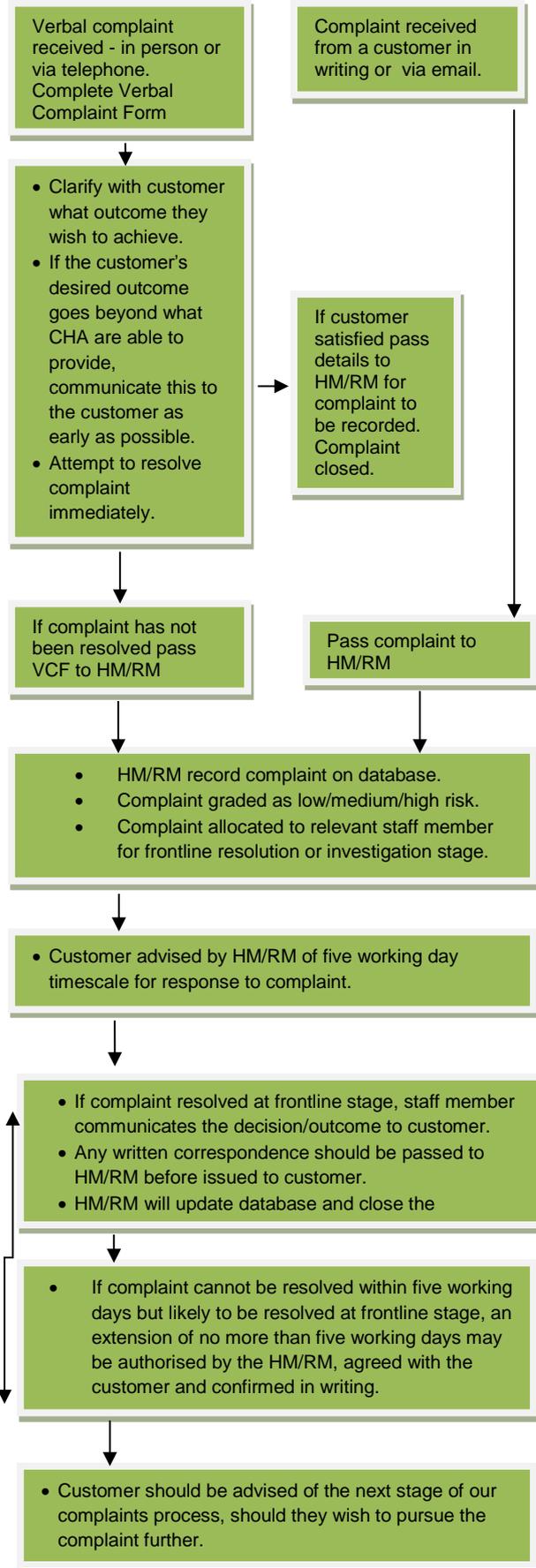
8.2 The contact details for the SPSO are as follows:-
FREEPOST SPSO
0800 377 7330

The contact details for the FOS are as follows:

Financial Ombudsman Service
Exchange Tower
London
E14 9SR
0300 123 9123

APPENDIX 1 COMPLAINTS PROCESS FLOWCHART

STAGE ONE



STAGE TWO

