

## HORTON HOUSING ASSOCIATION

### COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

#### SUMMARY

***Please note: there are separate and specific procedures for dealing with complaints in relation to Abuse and Harassment. This procedure should not be used for complaints of this type.***

If you are not happy please tell us.

- You just need to tell a member of staff or a manager.
- If you prefer to speak to someone else, you can contact Horton Head Office and speak to someone there or you can ask someone from outside of Horton to speak to us on your behalf
- If you can, tell us the outcome you are looking for.
- Staff will try to sort things out straight away.
- If we can't sort things out straight away, we will contact you within 4 working days to say we have received your complaint and tell you who is dealing with it.
- We will try our best to sort the complaint out within 10 working days. If we can't do this, we will explain to you why and tell you when we think we have sorted things out.
- If you are not happy about the outcome of your complaint, please tell us and a senior manager will look at your complaint again. They will give you a decision within 10 working days.
- Someone from Horton will offer to support you through every step of making a complaint or help you get an advocate if you prefer someone from outside.

#### **ADVICE AND ADVOCACY**

Horton has compiled a list of advice and advocacy agencies that may be willing to assist a person wishing to make a complaint. If you would like a copy of this list, please ask any member of staff or contact Head Office.

**Telephone:** 01274 370689

**Email:** [head.office@hortonhousing.co.uk](mailto:head.office@hortonhousing.co.uk)

**Write:** as below at 4.1

- You can also complain to some organisations outside Horton Housing Association for example, the organisation that funds or regulates the service HHA is delivering to you. (see details page 9)

**Everything is explained below and in the Client Handbook.  
There is also an easy-read version on our website or staff can give it to you.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Horton Housing Association (HHA) takes pride in offering high quality services. We believe we achieve this most of the time.
- 1.2 HHA is the parent body of Horton Housing Group and this Policy applies to all entities within the Group
- 1.3 **What is a complaint?** A complaint is a statement that a situation is unsatisfactory or unacceptable. You may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of the service we provide to you. If this is the case, we encourage you to raise your concerns and make a complaint in accordance with HHA's Complaints Procedure.
- 1.4 At HHA we want to ensure that we provide a welcoming, flexible, safe and caring environment. There may be times when you are unhappy about the service you have received and may feel that this warrants a complaint.
- 1.5 Feedback from clients and stakeholders helps us to improve in all areas of our work. We seek, welcome and act upon all kinds of feedback from many sources, including:
- Compliments, Comments, Complaints
  - Suggestion Boxes
  - Client Exit Questionnaires
  - Annual Client Survey
  - Stakeholder Surveys and Events
  - Stakeholder Evaluation Forms
  - Formal / Informal Complaints Log
- 1.6 Sometimes it may just be a passing comment, but all feedback is valuable to us.
- 1.7 When we do receive negative feedback or complaints we are committed to learning from them and using them to improve service delivery.

- 1.8 This Policy and Procedure are widely publicised and available to all clients and stakeholders for example through client induction and the Client Handbook or on notice boards.
- 1.9 Staff will explain the Policy and Procedure verbally to all new clients and anyone else who wishes to use it.
- 1.10 Alternative formats of the Policy can be made available on request.
- 1.11 There is an “easy-read” version to assist people who may have difficulty in reading or understanding the full Complaints Policy and Procedure. This includes clients who do not have the capacity to understand the procedure and or who may be unable to verbalise their wants, needs or dissatisfaction but can be supported to express them in other ways.
- 1.12 It is important for the individual’s support network (family, friends, support workers, advocates or people who know the individual well etc.) to be vigilant in recognising if the individual seems unhappy, identifying the reason and making a complaint on their behalf if appropriate.
- 1.13 If a person making a complaint needs anyone with them to translate or interpret, HHA will try to arrange this service with their agreement.
- 1.14 ‘Compliments, Complaints, Comments’ postcards are available to clients and other stakeholders to send back to us at any time.
- 1.15 **If we are getting it right, please let us know.**
- 1.16 In order to ensure that our services remain at a high and improving standard, we have a procedure through which you can let us know if for any reason you are not satisfied with your dealings with the organisation. We train our staff and any other representative of HHA (for example students and volunteers) in how to recognise and respond to complaints.
- 1.17 **If you are not happy with Horton Housing Association, please tell us.**
  - If you are unhappy about any HHA service, please speak to the relevant staff member or manager.
  - If you are unhappy with an individual in HHA (for example staff, students or volunteers), sometimes it is best to tell him or her directly. If you feel that this is difficult or inappropriate, then speak to the person’s manager or another manager in HHA.
  - Making a complaint will not adversely affect your support or the way you are treated.

- Often we will be able to give you a response straight away. When the matter is more complicated we will give you at least an initial response within 1 week. (See Stage 1 below).

1.18 Please tell us about your complaint as soon as possible to enable us to investigate it. Delays in telling us about complaints can mean that information and witnesses are no longer available and the investigation is unable to be concluded. For example, HHA only keeps paper records for a limited time and then they are destroyed.

1.19 To help us to resolve your complaint in a satisfactory manner, please tell us the outcome you are looking for.

## **2. AIMS OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

2.1 The procedure aims to provide clear and concise guidance to staff, clients and any other stakeholder on complaints handling. It aims to progress complaints in 3 stages, each escalating to a more senior level of staff.

It aims to be transparent and accessible for everyone who has a stake in HHA – clients, applicants, referrers and partner agencies, relatives and other stakeholders involved with HHA.

## **3. MAKING A COMPLAINT**

### **3.1 Stage 1 - Informal Stage**

This stage aims to sort out minor problems as quickly as possible. It involves informal discussion between you and staff. If you wish to bring someone with you to explain your problem or complaint, please do.

You should be advised of your right to make a formal complaint if you so wish and informed of your rights under the Complaints Policy & Procedure.

### **3.2 Stage 2 - Formal Stage**

If you are not happy with the outcome of Stage 1, or if the informal stage is not appropriate, you should register a formal complaint. This can be done verbally or in writing. Staff can provide information and assistance or help to find someone else to do this. A list of advice and advocacy agencies is available (see section 6 below).

The manager of the scheme or department will have initial responsibility for dealing with your complaint and making sure that proper records are kept. Where the complaint involves the manager, their line manager will have responsibility for dealing with it.

All formal complaints will be logged and you will receive a written acknowledgement within 4 working days.

Our aim is to investigate your complaint properly and give you a reply within 10 working days, setting out how the problem will be dealt with. If this is not possible, an interim response will be made informing you of the action taken to date or being considered.

At the end of the investigation you will be told the reasons for the decision and action to be taken, if any.

### 3.3 **Stage 3 - Review Stage**

If you are not satisfied with the response to Stage 2, you can ask for the complaint to be reviewed.

A senior manager who has not previously been involved will undertake the review. They will acknowledge this in writing to you, within 3 working days.

The review involves investigating the complaint and reporting in writing to you within 10 working days.

You will be told the reasons for the decision and action to be taken, if any.

There will also be an option to take the complaint externally if you are still unsatisfied with the outcome. The service will tell you who you can complain to.

## 4. **THE ROLE OF THE REGULATORY AND OTHER EXTERNAL BODIES**

4.1 If your complaint is about HHA and you are still unhappy with the response after you have followed the whole procedure set out above, you may be able to take your complaint to a relevant outside body or the service's funding body. Some of these are listed below.

If you are not sure which outside body to complain to, please ask, or get an advocate to ask, any member of staff or contact Head Office:

Horton Housing Association

Chartford House

54 Little Horton Lane

Bradford

BD5 0BS

**Telephone:** 01274 370689

**Email:** [head.office@hortonhousing.co.uk](mailto:head.office@hortonhousing.co.uk)

4.2. **Services Involving a Housing Association registered with the Homes England (HE) – A Housing Management Related Issue Only** (for example, in accommodation based schemes)

Complaints can be made to the appropriate Registered Provider (RP). Ask staff for details of who this is for your accommodation.

Complaints must be in writing and are limited to breach or non-performance of obligations set out in the Occupancy Agreement supplemented by the Regulator of Social Housing’s Consumer Standards.<sup>1</sup>

If you are still dissatisfied after the RP's Complaints Procedure has been exhausted, you have the right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN

**Telephone:** 0300 111 3000  
**Fax:** 020 7831 1942  
**Email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

#### 4.3 Local Authority Funding and Contractual Arrangements

If your service is funded by a local authority, you may be able to ask them to look at your complaint.

Bradford	Kirklees
<p>Department of Adult &amp; Community Services</p> <p><b>Adult Services Complaints Team</b></p> <p><b>FREE POST BRADFORD COUNCIL</b></p> <p><b>(Please write ‘Complaints Unit’ on the back of the envelope)</b></p> <p>Tel. 01274 436820</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:sscomplaintsunit@bradford.gov.uk">sscomplaintsunit@bradford.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Kirklees Adult Social Care Complaints</p> <p>Freepost: RTHS-EUEY-ZYCB, Customer Services Unit Civic Centre 1 Ground Floor South Huddersfield HD1 2NF Tel: 01484 225115 <a href="mailto:SSCU@kirklees.gov.uk">SSCU@kirklees.gov.uk</a></p> <p><u>HIPS (only)</u></p> <p>Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership (KBOP)</p> <p>Brian Jackson House 2 New North Parade Huddersfield</p>

<sup>1</sup> Regulatory standards that registered providers of social housing must meet: Published 1 April 2015  
Last updated 20 July 2018 —Regulator of Social Housing

	HD1 5JP  Tel 01484 519 955 (Ext 231 & 234)
<b>Calderdale</b>	<b>North Yorkshire</b>
Calderdale Council Adults, Health and Social Care Princess Street Halifax HX1 1TS Tel: 01422 393000 <a href="mailto:gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk">gatewaytocare@calderdale.gov.uk</a>	Health & Adult Service FREEPOST DL76 North Yorkshire County Council County Hall Northallerton DL7 8BR Tel: 0800 515875 <a href="mailto:social.complaints@northyorks.gov.uk">social.complaints@northyorks.gov.uk</a>

#### 4.4 **Services involving a Health body for example Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**

For example, Bradford Respite and Intermediate Care and Support Service (BRICSS) and some services within the Community Support Agency

If your complaint is about health or social care, you may make a complaint to either the organisation that provided your healthcare or the organisation that commissioned that Health Service. The commissioning body will be either the local clinical commissioning group (CCG) for hospital care, or NHS England for GP, dental, pharmacy and optical services

Every CCG will have its own complaints procedure, which is often displayed on its website.

<http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/complaints-and-feedback/Pages/nhs-complaints.aspx>

or you can contact the relevant Local Authority Complaints Team on the number above.

## 5. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

5.1 HHA will maintain a log of all formal complaints.

5.2 HHA will annually review all complaints, compliments and feedback to help improve service delivery.

- 5.3 HHA will ask you for feedback about how satisfied you are with the complaints process.
- 5.4 HHA will produce regular reports on complaints received and how satisfied complainants have been with the process. These reports will be made to the Management Board of HHA and in the Clients Newsletter.
- 5.5 This procedure will be evaluated annually. This will include asking whether there is sufficient awareness of the Policy & Procedure, any barriers to complaints being made and any actions identified that may improve the process.