

External Complaint, Compliment and Feedback Handling Procedure (New Zealand)

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- provide Workers with the framework for the processing and resolution of complaints in a timely, efficient and standardised manner,
- provide Workers with a framework for processing reviews on decisions,
- ensure procedural fairness in the management of complaints and review of decisions,
- identify how HOME in PLACE NZ tracks the number and type of complaints received,
- show how we use complaints to learn what we need to do to improve our work and help prevent the recurrence of similar complaint issues through the continuous improvement of HOME in PLACE NZ's services.

HOME in PLACE NZ's management of complaints, compliments and feedback, including the gathering of information related to feedback, and the way in which such data is stored and logged are important requirements in meeting our standards under HOME in PLACE CHAR-003 Client Service Charter and our responsibilities under HOME in PLACE NZ policies.

HOME in PLACE NZ is committed to providing fair and just review of its services and decisions to tenants, applicants, residents, families, carers, partners, workers, and other stakeholders by ensuring that complaints and feedback are addressed effectively, promptly, and fairly.

HOME in PLACE NZ External Complaint, Compliment and Feedback Handling Procedure outlines how we manage, record, resolve and respond to complaints and feedback.

The procedure is also in accordance with the best practices set out in the Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA) Better Practice Guide.¹

2. Scope

This procedure is intended to apply to any feedback, including anonymous complaints, regardless of who makes it with the following exceptions which have separate procedures:

- Neighbourhood disputes and difficulties, including accusations of anti-social behaviour, are covered by HOME in PLACE NZ's POL-8025-04 Management of Antisocial Behaviour Policy (NZ) & HOME in PLACE NZ's PROC-8006 Management of Antisocial Behaviour Procedure (NZ)
- Complaints and grievances by HOME in PLACE NZ's Workers against other HOME in PLACE Workers are dealt with in HOME in PLACE's POL-028-01 Workplace Grievance Policy.
- Complaints involving allegations of fraud, corruption, misconduct and financial wrongdoing are managed in accordance with HOME in PLACE NZ's POL-8013 Fraud and Corruption Policy (NZ),

¹ Standard 6.6 of the Best Practice Guide (Fourth edition - April 2011), Community Housing Aotearoa (CHA)

HOME in PLACE's POL-005-06 Financial Wrongdoing Policy and HOME in PLACE's PROC-033 Investigation Procedure.

- Complaints received from the Community Housing Regulatory Authority (CHRA NZ) are managed in accordance with section 3 of this Procedure (Procedure > MP, Ministerial & CHRA NZ Complaints/Enquiries)
- Appeals about decisions made by HOME in PLACE NZ which are dealt with in HOME in PLACE NZ's Internal Review and POL-8001 Appeals Policy (NZ)

Anonymous complaints can be lodged, recorded and investigated however, HOME in PLACE NZ's ability to investigate and act on anonymous complaints may be limited.

The process for handling child complaints may be generally managed in accordance with this policy however refer to HOME in PLACE's POL-003-02 Child Safeguarding Policy and HOME in PLACE's PROC-012-02 Child Friendly Complaint Handling Procedure for additional requirements for managing child complaints.

3. Procedure

HOME in PLACE NZ is committed to tenants', applicants', members of the community and/or other stakeholders' rights and will provide an effective complaints procedure that benefits the tenant, applicant, member of the community and/or other stakeholder and HOME in PLACE NZ in the long term, by providing a process for feedback and review that informs effective decision making for service improvement. HOME in PLACE NZ has written documentation that demonstrates a clear commitment to:

- the rights of tenants to respectful, fair and non-discriminatory treatment
- the provision of safe and secure housing
- privacy
- protecting personal information, and
- providing access to complaints and appeals processes

3.1 Context

The following definitions are provided to assist with categorising enquiries/feedback received to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Complaint Process Definitions

Term	Definition
Appeal	An appeal is a request for a review of a decision that impacts on a client's housing. This includes decisions relating to eligibility, offers of accommodation, rent assessment, transfers, pets or tenant charges.
Complainant	Person, organisation, or representative making a complaint.
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to HOME in PLACE's service delivery, staff, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. Complaints can be made to HOME in PLACE by tenants,

Term	Definition
	applicants or other third parties on their behalf or other people affected by the HOME in PLACE' s service delivery.
Client	Clients of HOME in PLACE NZ include applicants of housing assistance seeking services from HOME in PLACE NZ, or tenancies managed by HOME in PLACE NZ
Disputes	Unresolved complaints escalated internally or externally.
External Party	External Parties to the organisation seeking to provide feedback about HOME in PLACE NZ's service delivery. For Example; Landlords, Members of Local Parliament, representatives from Regional Local Councils, local tenant's protection and local support agencies and representative bodies etc.
Feedback	Feedback refers to opinions or comments, positive or negative, given to HOME in PLACE about its services. Feedback received, either positive or negative, should be acknowledged and the person providing the feedback thanked for taking the time to share their opinions as it assists HOME in PLACE's continuous improvement efforts. Feedback should be directed to the relevant manager and/or team member to acknowledge outstanding services and/or identify areas for improvement.
General Enquiry	A general enquiry is a request for information. Enquiries may come from tenants, applicants or other third parties on their behalf. Enquiries may also come from members of the community, clients, stakeholders, partners and other external third parties.
Service Request	A request for service is where tenants, applicants or other third parties on their behalf, contact HOME in PLACE, to ask for something. This could be to request maintenance work or to request a transfer application form. Staff receiving these requests for service have a key role in categorising Service Request and forwarding to the appropriate team for follow up. Requests for service can escalate into complaints where the assigned team/team member does not satisfactorily manage the request in a timely manner or where communication is poor.
Tenancy Issue	Tenancy issues are issues raised by tenants or other community members about their neighbours or neighbourhoods. This includes issues such as neighbour disputes, noise, vandalism, or accusations of anti-social behaviours. These are not considered to be complaints as they do not relate to dissatisfaction with HOME in PLACE's services. However, a tenancy issue can result in HOME in PLACE assisting in resolving the matter.

An enquiry or feedback (initially defined by any of the terms noted above) may be defined as a complaint if a previously reported issue has not been dealt with, in the first instance, in a satisfactory manner.

It is noted that if feedback is received and the person providing the feedback explicitly states that they wish to make a 'formal complaint', the feedback must be recorded as per the Complaints Handling process, regardless of how it may have been categorised otherwise. Tenancy issues may become complaints when the person(s) reporting the issue is not satisfied with how a HOME in PLACE has handled the issue in the first instance.

Complaint Priority Levels

Low priority Complaint	Moderate priority Complaint	High priority Complaint
<p>May relate to a single issue. Involves minimal risk to the complainant, department or engaged service provider. Will require a formal investigation; and Will be suitable for local resolution.</p>	<p>May relate to one or more issues. Involves a reasonable degree of risk to the complainant, organisation or engaged service provider. Will involve a more detailed investigation; and, Should involve consultation as to whether it will be suitable for local resolution.</p>	<p>May involve a serious or significant risk to the complainant, organisation or engaged service provider. Will involve a formal investigation; and, Is not suitable for local resolution.</p>
<p>Low priority complaints would usually be handled by an Executive Manager, or delegate.</p> <p>The CEO NZ may assign the investigation to an appropriate officer; however, the CEO NZ must sign off on the outcome of the complaint.</p>	<p>Moderate priority complaints would usually be handled by an Executive Manager, or delegate.</p> <p>The CEO NZ may assign the investigation to an appropriate officer; however, the CEO NZ must sign off on the outcome of the complaint</p>	<p>High priority complaints must be handled by a CEO NZ. The CEO NZ may assign the investigation to an appropriate officer; however, the CEO NZ must sign off on the outcome of the complaint.</p>

3.2 Complaints HOME in PLACE will not Action

HOME in PLACE will not accept complaints about matters already dealt with or currently being dealt with by another third-party agency, court and/or tribunal; matters that are impractical to investigate; or matters that appear to be frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance.

Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints

For the purpose of this Procedure, frivolous or vexatious complaints are defined as complaints that have no reasonable or sound basis in fact, are without merit, and/or have been made with the intention of harassing and/or discrediting HOME in PLACE, a HOME in PLACE tenant or Home in Place worker and have no reasonable prospect of reaching a mutually agreeable resolution. Examples include:

Frivolous Complaints:

- Repeated Complaints with No New Evidence:** A tenant repeatedly complains about an issue that has already been thoroughly investigated and resolved.
- Trivial Issues:** Complaints about minor issues that do not significantly impact the tenant's living conditions.
- Unrealistic or Unreasonable Demands:** Complaints requesting actions that are not within HiPs power or responsibility, such as demanding that neighbors be evicted because they own a pet (when pets are allowed under the tenancy agreement).
- Complaints Based on Personal Dislike:** A tenant complains about another resident simply because they do not like them, with no legitimate concerns or breaches of tenancy involved.

Vexatious Complaints:

1. **Malicious Complaints:** Complaints made with the intent to harass, intimidate, or cause harm to another resident or staff member, such as repeatedly accusing a neighbour of illegal activities without any evidence.
2. **Complaints with No Genuine Basis:** Complaints that are entirely fabricated or exaggerated, such as falsely claiming that the landlord has breached tenancy laws to manipulate or gain an unfair advantage.
3. **Retaliatory Complaints:** A tenant makes a complaint in retaliation for a previous legitimate action taken by HiP, such as being issued a warning for Breaching their Tenancy Agreement.
4. **Excessive Complaints:** A tenant lodges an excessive number of complaints, particularly about different issues, in a short period, with the apparent intent to overwhelm or burden HiP's company's resources.

HOME in PLACE maintains a zero-tolerance stance on aggressive / abusive / derogatory behaviour towards any member of staff. HOME in PLACE understand that, at times, complainants may be emotionally driven. Home in Place employees will, in the first instance, work with the complaint to de-escalate a situation however if the complainant displays behaviour with the potential to cause harm, HOME in PLACE is within their rights to terminate the interaction and not accept or register the complaint. For more details on dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour, refer to POL-020 Dealing with Difficult and Challenging Behaviours Policy.

Complaints that are identified as being frivolous or vexatious or contain abusive/aggressive/derogatory behaviour towards any member of staff, will not be registered, investigated, or progressed. Home in Place will acknowledge receipt of the correspondence and advise the complainant of HOME in PLACE's rights and responsibilities in accordance with company policy and procedure.

Complaints involving other Organisations and/or their personnel.

Complaints directed at another organisation, or their personnel will be referred to the concerned organisation. It is the responsibility of the organisation to address and resolve complaints according to their own established complaints handling policies and procedures.

Reviewable or Appealable Decisions

Some decisions made by HOME in PLACE NZ workers about housing services provided to clients can be appealed (reviewed).

If a complainant would like to request a review or appeal a decision made by HOME in PLACE, please refer to HOME in PLACENZ POL-8001 Appeals Policy (NZ). Those complaints which are appealable decisions are listed in HOME in PLACE NZ PROC-8002 Appeals Management procedure (NZ).

3.3 Types of Complaints

Complaints Managed by the external Complaint, Compliment and Feedback Handling Procedure

Complaint SR Types

Complaint SR Type	Description	GT Problem Code
Client Satisfaction	Complaints regarding dissatisfaction with how HOME in PLACE dealt with a complaint received and/or the Complaint Handling process.	Complaint.Satisfaction
Property Maintenance	<p>Complaints regarding the service delivery specific to maintenance of assets, quality of repairs undertaken and timeframes to complete lodged service request. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification and/or maintenance requests Quality of maintenance Incomplete maintenance jobs <p>Issues with maintenance staff including conduct (including contractors)</p> <p>Issues with maintenance related contact (including contact by trades engaged by HOME in PLACE)</p> <p>NOTE: If this is the first time the maintenance has been reported to HOME in PLACE, this will be referred to the Maintenance Team as Service Request (as noted in section 3.1).</p>	Complaint.Maintenance
Neighbour Complaints	<p>Any complaint raised by a neighbour (either immediate or withing close proximity) of a HOME in PLACE tenant including private neighbours and other HOME in PALCE tenants.</p> <p>If the complaint relates to the Quiet Enjoyment and/or alleged Anti-Social Behaviour, this should be managed in accordance with the Management of Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedure Neighbourhood Disputes and allegations of Anti-Social Behaviour. In the first instance.</p>	Complaint.Neighbour
Rent/Water Charge/Tenant debt	<p>Complaints relating to Tenancy matters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental calculations Charging rent (rent subsidy) including calculation of rent subsidies; Cancellation of rent subsidies; Tenants eligibility for a rent subsidy; Disputing costs and/or charges incurred by the tenant upon vacation of a dwelling; Disputing charges incurred by the tenant during their tenancy i.e. maintenance charges; Bond charges; 	Complaint.RentWatDebt

Complaint SR Type	Description	GT Problem Code
	Water charges including grant of a water usage allowance as per HOME in PLACE policy.	
Termination of Tenancy/Eviction	Complaints related to Tenancy matters where the tenancy is terminated by HOME in PLACE: Notice of termination; Breach notices; Eviction orders; Warrants.	Complaint.TerminEvict
Housing needs	Complaints related to the housing needs of tenants including: Transfer requests; Succession of Tenancy requests; Application for additional occupants; Tenant support.	Complaint.HouseNeeds
Housing allocation	Complaints related to the specific needs of a tenant or applicant with regard to: Housing application; Application for priority housing; Suitability of property offered; Acceptance and/or withdrawal of housing offer.	Complaint.Allocation
Complaints about the HOME in PLACE (Provider)	Complaints where a third party has been adversely affected by the service delivery or actions of HOME in PLACE workers or persons engaged to carry out work on behalf of HOME in PLACE.	Complaint.ServDelivery
Complaints from a Minor	The General Managing Director is appointed as HOME in PLACE Child Protection Incident Reporting Focal Officer who is responsible for overseeing all child complaint handling processes. See below for further information relating to complaints made by children/minors.	Complaint.FromChild
Ministerial	Enquiries which are made directly to HOME in Place by way of Ministerial correspondence or contact are managed by the Group Executive Manager Governance or their representative. These complaints are responded to according to the allocated timeframe and appropriately actioned within 24 hours from the time a request for information by the Minister is received by HOME in PLACE.	Complaint.Ministerial
Repeat	Complaints where a previous complaint has been closed/resolved, however the same issue or concern has reoccurred. <i>Note: Multiple complaints made by a complainant regarding the same matter within 30 days are treated as one complaint. i.e. If the initial complaint has been closed and</i>	Complaint.Repeat

Complaint SR Type	Description	GT Problem Code
	<i>the same issues is raised within 30 days of the initial complaint being raised, the complaint SR is to be re-opened.</i>	
	<p>A complaint regarding security or personal safety typically refers to a formal expression of concern or dissatisfaction raised by a resident or tenant regarding issues related to their safety or security within their housing environment. Examples include:</p> <p>Physical Security: Concerns about the adequacy of locks, lighting, surveillance systems, or other physical security measures in the premises.</p> <p>Safety Hazards: Complaints regarding potential hazards or risks within the housing complex, such as broken fixtures, unsafe staircases, or lack of emergency exits.</p> <p>Response to Emergencies: Complaints about the effectiveness or timeliness of emergency response procedures, including access to emergency services or the responsiveness of property management.</p>	Complaint.SafeSecure
Other	<p>Any other complaints that are not defined by the above mentioned complaint types. This includes Anti-Discrimination, Privacy, Allegations of Fraud, Corruption or Misconduct and Anonymous complaints.</p> <p>NOTE: all complaints classified as 'Other' should state the issue in the Subject field of the SR in GreenTree. If a complaint type is managed outside of this procedure, this should be noted in the GreenTree SR including the platform and reference number.</p>	Complaint.Other

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be lodged, recorded, and investigated however, HOME in PLACE's ability to investigate and act on anonymous complaints may be limited.

Anti-Discrimination Complaints

Anti-discrimination complaints are raised as a Complaint.Other (with the custom Reason = Anti-Discrimination) SR in GreenTree and referred to the CEO NZ for investigation and response.

Anti-Discrimination complaints, received via the Human Rights Commission² are lodged via HOME in PLACE's online system for incident and risk management and referred to the CEO NZ for investigation. Complaints are responded to by the Executive Manger Group Executive Services as delegated by the Group Managing Director.

Ministerial Complaint

Complaints which are made directly to HOME in PLACE NZ by way of Ministerial correspondence or contact are managed by the CEO, Group Executive Manager Governance or their delegate.

² <https://www.govt.nz/browse/law-crime-and-justice/human-rights-in-nz/complain-about-discrimination/>

These complaints are responded to according to the allocated timeframe and appropriately actioned within 24 hours from the time a request for information by the Minister is received by HOME in PLACE NZ. A ministerial complaint would be received, acknowledged and recorded in Greentree using:

Operations Service Request / Problem Code: Op.Ministerial

Complaints Managed outside of the Compliment, Complaint and Feedback Handling Procedure

Neighbourhood Disputes and allegations of Anti-Social Behaviour

This procedure does not apply to areas that HOME in PLACE NZ does not have direct control over, including but not restricted to:

- Neighbour disputes
- Accusations of disruptive behaviour
- Reports of criminal behaviour
- Noise and nuisance
- Domestic violence monitoring effectiveness and reporting

It is noted that HOME in PLACE NZ can only act on the Breaches of the Residential Tenancy Agreement for which appropriate action will be taken in accordance with Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure. Refer to HOME in PLACE NZ's POL-8006 Management Antisocial Behaviour Policy (NZ) and HOME in PLACE NZ's PROC-8006 Management Antisocial Behaviour Procedure (NZ) for information about managing anti-social behaviour, neighbour disputes, nuisance and annoyance.

Complaints Regarding Non-HOME in PLACE NZ Neighbours

Where a complaint is received from a tenant about problems being experienced with a neighbour, HOME in PLACE NZ will assist the tenant by providing information to the tenant on methods of dispute resolution, such as:

- communication with their neighbour;
- intervention by local authorities including local Councils, Body corporate;
- intervention by the police; and
- any available mediation processes, including Regional Community Law Centres; NZ Dispute Resolution Centre (NZDRC) etc.

HOME in PLACE NZ will expect the tenant to initiate action after being given contact information to resolve any dispute and HOME in PLACE NZ will not act as an advocate or third party in such disputes.

Community Housing Regulatory Authority (CHRA NZ)

From time to time the Community Housing Regulatory Authority NZ (CHRA NZ) may receive complaints and allegations relating to dissatisfaction with HOME in PLACE NZ's compliance with the Public and Community Housing Management Act and Public and Community Housing (Community Housing Provider) Regulations.

These complaints are acknowledged, investigated and responded to by the CEO, Group Executive Manager Governance or their delegate. When a complaint from CHRA NZ is received it is lodged in the HOME in PLACE NZ online system for compliance, incident, and risk management.

Local Member of Parliament (MP) Complaints

These complaints are acknowledged, investigated and responded to by the CEO. An MP complaint would be recorded in Greentree using:

Operations Service Request / Problem Code: Op.MP Enquiry

Privacy Complaint

A person may make a complaint if they feel their personal information has been handled inappropriately by HOME in PLACE NZ, refer to **HOME in PLACE NZ's POL-8019 Privacy Policy (NZ)**. Privacy complaints are managed in accordance with HOME in PLACE NZ Complaints Management and this procedure. If a complainant is not satisfied with HOME in PLACE NZ response or the way HOME in PLACE NZ has dealt with the complaint, the individual may make a formal written complaint to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC).

Where there has been a notifiable data breach an incident report will be lodged via the HOME in PLACE NZ online compliance, incident and risk management system in accordance with HOME in PLACE's POL-036 ICT Breach Management Policy.

Complaints including Allegations of Fraud, Corruption or Misconduct

The Group chief Financial Officer (GCFO) is appointed as the HOME in PLACE Fraud Officer. Complaints including allegations of fraud, corruption, misconduct are required to be lodged via an incident form in the Incident, Risk, Compliance and Information Platform and actioned in accordance with HOME in PLACE NZ's POL-8013 Fraud and Corruption Policy (NZ), HOME in PLACE's POL-005-06 Financial Wrongdoing Policy and HOME in PLACE's PROC-033 Investigation Procedure. The person responsible for managing the complaint is responsible for lodging the incident form.

If the complaint is from an Eligible Whistleblower refer to HOME in PLACE NZ's POL-8034 Whistle Blower Policy (NZ) for whistle blower protections and provisions that apply to the complaint investigation.

HOME in PLACE NZ will carefully assess the safety of reporting to authorities and will consider the preferences of Victims/Survivors and Whistleblowers.

Substantiated Complaints or Ongoing Disruption Complaints against HOME in PLACE NZ's Tenants

Substantiated complaints or ongoing disruption complaints against HOME in PLACE NZ tenants include serious disputes which involve anti-social behaviour which is persistent or intentional, represents a nuisance and causes interference with the peace, comfort, or privacy of others.

HOME in PLACE NZ takes all complaints seriously and will investigate every complaint about anti-social behaviour involving any household member or visitor. HOME in PLACE NZ will investigate any claims as per HOME in PLACE NZ's Anti-Social Behaviour Procedures.

HOME in PLACE NZ is not able to investigate alleged criminal activity as this is outside of HOME in PLACE NZ's jurisdiction. HOME in PLACE NZ will liaise with local police in cases involving alleged criminal activity and HOME in PLACE NZ's employees may need to assist the Police in a criminal investigation.

3.4 Complaint Management Process - Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Group Executive Manager Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Group Executive Manager Governance (GEMG) is appointment as the Manager responsible for the Complaints Handling process for HOME in PLACE. • Ensuring that there is a process for rapid and effective notification to top management of any significant complaints; • Ensuring that the complaints management process is planned, designed, implemented, maintained and continually improved in accordance with the complaints management policy of the organisation; • Periodically reviewing the complaints management process to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently maintained and continually improved; • Closing out of complaints; • Establishing a process of performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting; • Reporting to management on the complaint’s management process, with recommendations for improvement; • Maintaining the effective and efficient operation of the complaint’s management process, including the training of appropriate personnel, technology requirements, documentation, setting and meeting target time limits and other requirements, and process reviews; • Appointing a complaints management representative/Complaints Officer and clearly defining his or her responsibilities and authority in addition to the responsibilities and authority set out below.
Governance Administration Officer	<p>The Governance Administration officer is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of the complaint’s procedure and process including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Triaging of complaints received; – Follow up of complaints investigation; – Review of complaints close out letters; – Administration of complaints in Greentree; – Notification to complainant of outcome of complaint; • Regular monthly and quarterly reporting in accordance with Company requirements.
Group Executive and Executive Management	<p>Group Executive and Executive Management are responsible for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the complaints management process and objectives are adhered to; • Ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaint’s management process and the need for a customer focus through HOME in PLACE; • Ensuring that information about the complaint’s management process is communicated to customers, complainants, and, where applicable, other parties directly concerned in an easily accessible manner.
Other managers	<p>Other managers involved in the complaint’s management process should, as applicable within their area of responsibility, be responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the complaints management process is implemented; • Liaising with the complaint’s management representative; • Ensuring the promotion of awareness of the complaint’s management process and of the need for a customer focus; • Ensuring that information about the complaint’s management process is easily accessible; • Reporting on actions and decisions with respect to complaints handling; • Ensuring that monitoring of the complaint’s management process is undertaken and recorded;

Role	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that action is taken to correct a problem, prevent it happening in the future, and that the event is recorded; Ensuring that complaints management data are available for the executive management review.
Workers	<p>All Workers, including frontline workers in contact with clients and complainants, are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being aware of their roles, responsibilities and authorities in respect of complaints; Being familiar with HOME in PLACE Policy and Procedures regarding the complaints management process; Being familiar with what information to provide to complainants and where this information is located; Accepting a client or stakeholder complaint and recording a complaint or enquiry in accordance with HOME in Place policies and procedures; Complying with any complaints management reporting requirements determined by HOME in PLACE; Treating clients and stakeholders in a courteous manner and promptly responding to their complaints or direct them to the appropriate individual, and; Communicating in a respectful manner without prejudice.

3.5 RECEIVING Complaints

The following information outlines the procedure to guide HOME in PLACE NZ Worker's in managing a complaint. There are five phases involved in managing a complaint:

#	Phase	GreenTree Status of SR
1	Receive and Record	C1.Receipt of Complaint
		C2.Acknowledge
2	Assess and Prioritise	C3.Investigate and Review
3	Investigate, Document and Action	
4	Outcomes and System Improvement	
5	Monitoring Effectiveness and Reporting	C5.Complaint Investigation Finalised
		C6.Send to Complaints Officer for Review
		C7.Complaint Reviewed and Finalised

3.5.1 RECEIVE AND RECORD

The primary function of receiving /recording a complaint is to ensure that the complainant receives acknowledgement that their complaint is being addressed and it is recorded in Greentree and, if required, in the Incident, Risk, Compliance and Information platform for further action.

Employees are required to record complaint details within Greentree in accordance with the NG-119 Complaint Service Request Navigation Guide. The record created is known as a **Complaint Service Request (SR)**.

Complaints are categorised according to the Complaint Types (noted in section 3.3 Complaints Managed by the Complaint Handling Procedure).

For information on how to manage different complaint & enquiry types, refer to FLOW-012-02 Complaint Receiving Flowchart.

NOTE: A complaint that covers multiple matters should be raised as a single complaint and recorded against the primary focus of the complaint.

Available mediums to lodge a complaint: A complaint can be lodged with HOME in PLACE NZ via any mode of communication. Examples include:

- Telephone 0800 124 663
- Writing Hand delivered to a HOME in PLACE NZ or posted to:
Attn: HOME in PLACE Complaints Officer
PO Box 20-032, GLEN EDEN AUCKLAND NZ 0602
- Email feedback@homeinplace.org
- Via the website <https://homeinplacenz.org/feedback-and-appeals-1>

As far as practicable, reasonable assistance should be provided to people who wish to make a complaint. Such assistance may include for example, providing an interpreter or referring them to a support person who can assist them with putting their complaint in writing if a complainant has language difficulties or is visually or hearing impaired.

Receiving a complaint

When receiving a complaint, it is important that the complainant feels heard and their complaint is acknowledged and not trivialised. Effective management of a complaint in the initial stages may prevent a complaint escalating.

NOTE: *When raising a Complaint SR in GreenTree, the user should assign the complaint status as “C1.Receipt of Complaint” this will ensure the Complaint SR appears in the Complaint Officer’s “SR’s For My Action” on their Greentree desk.*

Acknowledging a complaint

Should a complaint be received via writing, fax, email or website, the complainant should be contacted, and their complaint acknowledged in writing (either by post or via email). Should the complaint be received in person or over the phone, the person taking the complaint should request contact details from the complainant (including a phone and/or email/postal address). The complaint will be lodged and documented in Greentree and a reference number will be generated. This number is to be issued as an acknowledgement and to reassure the complainant that investigation and appropriate action will be taken.

All complaints must be acknowledged in writing, either by sending an email or posting a letter, within three (3) working days of the complaint being received by HOME in PLACE NZ.

NOTE: *The Complaints Officer will acknowledge the complaint and issue a letter of receipt to the complainant, either by post or via email (NOTE copies of template letters are located on the L-Drive). At this stage of the Complaint Handling Process, the SR Status in GreenTree is “C2.Acknowledge”*

Following the acknowledgement of the complaint, the Complaints Officer will assign the Complaint SR to the appropriate Manager (Executive/Group/General) in GreenTree and update the status of the SR To “C3.Investigate and Review”. The Complaint SR will now appear in the user’s Action Items on their GreenTree desk.

Documenting a complaint

All complaints are to be documented in HOME in PLACE NZ’s Greentree system via a Service Request. It is important to inform the complainant that information will be recorded and documented so the complaint can be dealt with in the most effective way.

Privacy and personal information

When collecting personal information, an employee must provide the Privacy Notice to the complainant and any other person that may be requested to provide personal information while investigating the complaint. The privacy notice must be given to the complainant if practicable, before the collection of the personal information, or as soon as practicable after the collection. Complainants may access, change or update any personal information HOME in PLACE NZ holds about them, subject to the New Zealand Privacy Act (2020).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will always be respected and maintained within the constraints of the need to fully investigate a complaint, subject to any legal authorisation or requirements for disclosure and consistent with the principles of natural justice.

HOME in PLACE NZ will accept anonymous complaints and investigate these as practically possible. They may be lodged in writing or accepted as an oral statement. Complainants will be encouraged to provide as much information as possible. Anonymous complaints will be treated with the same priority as other complaints.

When communicating with a complainant, it is important to collect as much information as possible, including:

- the complainant’s name, address, email, and best contact number
- identifying whether they are a HOME in PLACE NZ tenant, resident, applicant, support/authorised person or a member of the community
- the basis of their complaint; ask for dates, time and place of any associated events
- if the complaint is about a HOME in PLACE NZ Worker, ask for the Worker’s name; if they are not able to provide this information, ask for a description of the Worker and what service was being provided at the time
- the name and, if possible, contact details of any witnesses
- how the incident has affected the person

- any further information or evidence that supports the complaint and will assist in the assessment and resolution process, and
- any relevant documentation relating to the complaint should be scanned and attached to the Complaint Service Request.

3.5.2 ASSESS AND PRIORITISE

On raising a Complaint Service Request, a priority status needs to be applied to the complaint for it to be processed appropriately. Determination of this status is based on what level of management is required to resolve the complaint. HOME in PLACE NZ Workers are empowered to resolve issues where possible at first point of contact.

Reason for Complaint being Raised

In addition to the Complaint Problem type being selected (from the Main Tab in GreenTree). Complaints regarding HOME in PLACE NZ should also record the reason for the complaint being raised. This is done from the “Custom” Tab in GT. Refer to *Annexure 2 Complaint Reason Tree Selection*

3.5.3 INVESTIGATE, DOCUMENT AND ACTION

Investigating

HOME in PLACE NZ may undertake various methods to gather information to substantiate a complaint.

The investigation process must be objective, reasonable and conducted in good faith. Decisions must be made on the weight of evidence and on the balance of probabilities. Investigating a complaint may include:

- clarifying the details provided in a complaint
- identifying actions taken to resolve the issue before the complaint was lodged
- gathering and analysing information from relevant file notes, correspondence and/or other sources
- reviewing applications submitted by the complainant
- reviewing documentation submitted by the complainant
- reviewing previous administrative decisions or actions
- interviewing complainants, Workers and/or other individuals involved in the complaint
- reviewing relevant policies, procedures and/or legislation, and
- reviewing previous complaints about the same issue.

Records of each investigation should contain all correspondence, including file notes of telephone conversations, interviews, and findings from investigations, recommendations, and internal approvals. The file should also contain evidence of the steps taken to investigate the complaint including a summary of actions in respect of recommendations (if any) made.

All information will be gathered and recorded in Greentree against the Complaint Service Request and if required in the incident, Risk, Compliance, and Information Platform for CHRA NZ complaints/enquiries. Any relevant documentation / evidence that has been gathered should be scanned/saved and attached to the Complaint Service Request. This process will assist should the complaint need to undergo an Internal Review.

It should be recognised that complex matters may require a more detailed, structured investigation to be conducted and this should be communicated to the relevant parties.

Actions Taken to Address a Complaint

Following completion of the investigation into the complaint, the investigation findings are to be recorded and a written response drafted.

NOTE: *template letters for written responses are accessed from within the Complaint SR in Greentree and navigating to the L Drive.*

The resolution of a complaint should include:

- **Acknowledgement** – of how the complainant has been affected and their expectations of a quality service
- **Apology** – for some people, a genuine apology may be all or part of what is sought
- **Answers** – an explanation of what happened or the provision of information that may be needed to address the complainant’s concerns
- **Action** – agreements on steps to address the concern and improve services.

If the complaint has been found to be substantiated or partially substantiated, details of remedial actions to be taken should be provided to the complainant in the written response. If the complaint is unsubstantiated, the reason for this decision must be provided to the complainant in writing.

NOTE: During the review process, consideration should be given to what remedy and systems improvement may be required. The CEO NZ, will review the outcome of the complaint and draft a response letter. The response letter must be generated by the Assigned User from Greentree using the letter templates provided. The response letter needs to be attached to the Complaints Service Request via the attachments field in the right-hand menu.

The Complaint Service Request status can now be changed to “C5.Complaint Investigation Finalised”

The response letter for Ministerial and CHRA NZ Enquiries must be written in a factual professional manner and attached to either the Ministerial Service Request or the Incident, Risk, Compliance, and Information Platform.

Where possible the complainant should also be advised of the resolution via telephone by the Executive Manager responsible. Telephone contact however does not eliminate the requirement to provide a written response (via post or email) which is sent by the Complaints officer.

Response Times

Complaint Type	Response Time
General Complaints	Complaints will be investigated as quickly as possible. Complaints that relate to a simple matter should be finalised within 20 working days.
Complex Complaints	HOME in PLACE acknowledges that some complaints may require a more detailed investigation and, therefore, will result in more extended time for resolving the complaint (no more than 42 days). In these circumstances, the extended time for resolving the complaint will be communicated to the complainant.
Privacy and Confidentiality	Any complaint that is made about a privacy issue will be completed within 60 days.
Ministerial Complaints	<p>Complaints which are made directly to HOME in PLACE NZ by way of Ministerial correspondence or contact must be responded to according to the allocated timeframe and appropriately actioned within 24 hours from the time a request for information by the Minister is received by HOME in PLACE by way of assigning a follow-up to the CEO NZ to request information on required questions. A ministerial complaint coming from the Minister will be deemed received on the date the Minister forwards the complaint to HOME in PLACE NZ.</p> <p>Once the CEO NZ has responded to the required questions the Governance Unit will draft a response and respond in writing.</p>

Finalisation

The draft resolution response is reviewed by the Complaints Officer to determine all aspects of the complaint have been investigated/addressed and relayed satisfactorily to the complainant. As previously mentioned, the resolution letter should address the actions taken to resolve the complaint.

Complainants must receive written acknowledgement and advice about the resolution of their complaint within required timeframes (see 'Response Times' above).

The response must include information about further steps they can take if they are dissatisfied with the resolution of a complaint such as referral to the:

- The Tenancy Tribunal for disputes relating to Tenancy Agreements in New Zealand.
- Privacy Commissioner for complaints about Privacy complaints

NOTE: Once the Complaints Officer is satisfied that the complaint has been responded to adequately, they will issue a copy of the final Closing/Resolution letter to the complainant. A copy of the final letter and/or email sent should be attached to the Complaint SR. A solution is selected from the drop-down menu and a Solution Summary is added to the Complaint SR. The status is then changed to "C6.Send to Complaints Officer for Review"

The Group Executive Manager Governance conducts a final review of the complaint, ensuring all relevant information is documented. Once satisfied that the complaint can be finalised, they update the status of the SR to "C7.Complaint Reviewed and finalised "

Finalisation Ministerial Request

The Governance Unit will forward the Ministerial Response on behalf of the CEO NZ and ensure all documentation including responses and approvals are attached to the Service Request in Greentree.

3.5.4 OUTCOMES AND SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

When developing system improvement recommendations, consideration should be given to the extent the action will:

- prevent the recurrence of similar complaints
- improve service delivery

System improvements can include:

- policy and procedure change
- practice review, and
- Worker training and other professional development activity may also be recommended.

Remedial action that may be appropriate and reasonable to remedy errors and deficiencies in service include (for example):

- an explanation
- a change in decision
- formal or informal dispute resolution
- an apology, and/or
- written warning letter or notice to remedy breach, and
- correction of any misleading or incorrect records.

Executive Managers are to take into consideration the complaint monitoring reports and are responsible for investigating the validity and applicability of the recommendations made by the Complaints Officer in informing corrective actions or continuous improvement strategies.

3.5.5 MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS AND REPORTING

Recording of complaints information allows identification of any trends or system issues to inform improvements to the services we provide.

On request of the CEO NZ, the Governance Administration Officer will prepare a quarterly Complaint Summary Report which includes:

- Date opened / closed
- SR reference #
- Complaint Type
- Reason for complaint being raised
- Summary of resolution

The Complaints reporting function (for HOME in PLACE Group) is performed by Governance Administration Officer in accordance with HOME in PLACE's PROC-012-01 Complaint Compliment and Feedback Handling Procedure.

3.6 RECEIVING Compliments

Positive feedback (a compliment) is received by clients as a way of showing their appreciation for the services they have received. Receiving positive feedback and recognising individuals for their work has proven to have a positive impact in the workplace by motivating people, boosting self-esteem and improving self-confidence.

It is important to recognise team members for a job well done. Compliments may be received by a variety of methods including:

- In person
- By email
- Written letter
- Post on social media

The Compliments Register is managed through HOME in PLACE's online Incident, Compliance and Risk Management Software (Folio) and administered by the Governance Unit.

The process for registering a compliment is as follows:

1. Raise a Compliment record in Folio
2. A certificate of recognition will be issued to the team member receiving the compliment
3. A record of the compliment will be included on the team members' employment record.
4. A post on the HOME in PLACE Message Board on SharePoint.

Refer to NG 119-1 Receiving a Compliment for details on the compliment process.

4. Responsibilities

All HOME in PLACE NZ workers have responsibilities and obligations relating to QMS documents. For further information click here: [Responsibilities and Obligations](#).

The relevant Group Executive Managers have responsibilities relating to QMS documents. For further information click here: [GEM Responsibilities and Obligations](#).

5. Implementation and Review

This procedure is listed on HOME in PLACE NZ's Controlled Documents Register and is a controlled document requiring approval of any changes. For further information on the implementation and review of QMS documents please click here: [Implementation and Review QMS documents](#)

For further information contact the Responsible Officer listed under Document Information.

6. Resources and related documents

Suite of Documents

- POL-8012 External Complaint Compliment and Feedback Handling Policy
- PROC-012-01 Complaint Compliment and Feedback Handling Procedure

Related documents

- POL-028 Workplace Relations Policy Manual
- POL-8013 Fraud and Corruption Policy (NZ)

- POL-005-06 Financial Wrongdoing Policy
- PROC-033 Investigation Procedure
- POL-8001 Appeals Policy (NZ)
- POL-003-02 Child Safeguarding Policy
- PROC-012-02 Child Friendly Complaint Handling Procedure
- POL-8025-04 Management of Antisocial Behaviour Policy (NZ)
- PROC-8006 Management of Antisocial Behaviour Procedure (NZ)
- POL-028 Workplace Relations Policy Manual
- POL-8013 Fraud and Corruption Policy (NZ)
- POL-005-06 Financial Wrongdoing Policy
- PROC-033 Investigation Procedure
- POL-8006 Management Antisocial Behaviour Policy (NZ)
- POL-8019 Privacy Policy (NZ)
- POL-036 ICT Breach Management Policy
- POL-8034 Whistle Blower Policy (NZ)
- NG-119 Complaint Service Request Navigation Guide
- PROC-8002 Appeals Management procedure (NZ)

Related legislation/standards

- Best Practice Guide for Community Housing in Aotearoa NZ (4th edition- April 2011)
- NZ Privacy Act (2020)
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC)
- NZ Dispute Resolution Centre (NZDRC)
- Public and Community Housing Management Act 1992
- Public and Community Housing (Community Housing Provider) Regulations 2014

7. Definitions

For the glossary of definition for Home in Place (New Zealand) QMS documents please click on the link:
[Definitions Table New Zealand](#)

End of document.