

HOMES FOR WELLS TENANTS COMPLAINTS POLICY

This policy is to comply with Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Service

This procedure is available to tenants who consider they have a complaint against or wish to appeal a decision made by Homes for Wells.

HFW is a small organisation managing around 30 properties. All tenants have the direct phone number of our General Manager.

Of course from time to time tenants will need to report something not working or causing a problem 'a service request' - this policy is for when a service request is not resolved promptly or to the tenants satisfaction.

We will not consider as a complaint

- Complaints where the issue occurred over 12 months ago (although HFW will consider if discretion should be applied to extend this period)
- Something we have no control over eg NNDC allocation policy
- Complaints that have already been considered under our complaints process
- Insurance claims for damages and matter subject to legal proceedings
- Matters already being dealt with by the Ombudsman Service
- A service request where we have not been asked to take action and put something right (which we have not previously failed to address)
- Any expression of dissatisfaction made through a survey - although we will inform if possible how they can pursue a complaint.

If we decide not to accept a complaint an explanation will be provided to the tenant as to why the matter is not suitable for our complaints policy and the tenant will be informed of their right to take the matter to the Ombudsman.

If a tenant is under a disability and requires any reasonable adjustment we will endeavour to accommodate that.

We have a simple two stage process – when this is exhausted a tenant may refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman – see the end of this policy.

NB a complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

A complaint may be made even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing.

The word 'complaint' does not have to be made for it to be treated as such.

This policy is available on our website.

The person with responsibility for complaint handling is our General Manager.

The person on the Board with responsibility is The Chair.

If for any reason we consider we cannot comply with the time scales in this code we will notify an alternative timescale to our tenant and agree suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.

STAGE 1

We prefer complaints to be raised by email to our General Manager setting out in full the nature of the complaint. If a tenant prefers to raise a complaint by phone our General Manager will put the details in an email to the tenant (or a letter if no email).

A complaint may be made by a third party on behalf of a tenant.

The GM will ensure that the complaint is logged together with the outcome the tenant seeking.

Any complaint will be defined and logged within 5 working days of the complaint being received.

A full response to stage 1 complaints will be made within 10 working days of the complaint being logged.

A resident will be informed of any extension of time required which will normally be not more than a further 10 working days without good reason and the tenant will be informed of that reason. If an extension is required the tenant will also be given details of the Ombudsman.

At the end of stage 1 HFW will inform the tenant of

- The complaint stage
- The complaint definition
- The decision on the complaint
- The reason for any decision made
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right
- Details of any outstanding actions
- Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the tenant is not satisfied with the response.

STAGE 2

If all or part of a stage 1 complaint is not resolved to our tenant satisfaction it must be progressed to stage 2.

Stage 2 requests will be logged and defined within 5 working days of the escalation request being received.

Stage 2 requests will be considered by a Panel consisting of at least two Board Members (who were not involved in the original decision if that is possible).

HFW will issue a final response within 20 working days of the stage 2 complaint being acknowledged.

The Panel will consider the complainant's statement together with a report and any other relevant documentation from the General Manager. If considered appropriate the Panel will invite the complainant to attend a meeting within 10 working days of the complaint being received.

If there is a meeting the complainant may bring to the meeting a friend for support and to take notes but who may not participate in the proceedings.

If an extension of time is required, The Panel will inform the tenant of the expected timescale which will not be more than a further 20 working days without good reason and the reason for the extension will be clearly explained to the tenant. If there is to be an extension the tenant will be given the details of the Ombudsman.

HFW will confirm the following to the tenant at the completion of stage 2

- The complaint stage
- The complaint definition
- The decision on the complaint
- The reasons for any decisions made
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions
- Details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the tenant remains dissatisfied.

THE OMBUDSMAN

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the Panel's response and the matter is unresolved, the complainant will be advised to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool L33 7WQ

Complaints are made on line at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk or telephone on 0300 111 3000