BRADFORD TRADESMEN'S HOMES

Charity Registration No. 224389 ☎ 01274 543022

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Bradford Tradesmen's Homes

Registered charity number: 224389

Complaints Policy and Procedures 2026

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to the trustees of Bradford Tradesmen's Homes and seeks to ensure that the Charity's complaints process is flexible and responsive to the needs of individual complainants to enable residents to be heard and understood.

[The Charity complies with the Complaint Handling Code issued by the Housing Ombudsman Service. All complaints dealt with under this policy will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the Code and the Charity will maintain all records as required by the Code.]

1.2 A **complaint** is defined as: "an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the Charity, its trustees, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

1.3 The word "complaint" does not need to be used expressly for the matter to be considered a complaint. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction the Charity must give them the option to make a complaint. Complaints made by residents may be made by the resident's carer, family members or a representative of a resident and these must be handled in line with the Charity's complaints policy.

1.4 A request from a resident to act to put something right (e.g., to carry out routine maintenance etc.) is considered to be a **service request** and not a **complaint**. Service requests should be dealt with in accordance with the Residents' Handbook. Failure to deal appropriately with a service request may lead to the matter being dealt with as a complaint.

1.5 A complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. The Charity must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the resident raises a complaint.

1.6 An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a resident's survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where the Charity has asked for wider feedback about their services, they must also provide details of how residents can raise a complaint.

Governor : The Lord Mayor of Bradford
Chairman : Mr IM Underwood
Trust Administrator : Mr. D. D. Broughton

COMMITTEE Mrs J Carter Mr P Fahy
Miss B Craig
Mr P Alexander

1.7 In dealing with complaints the Charity will ensure that:

(a) individuals who raise a complaint are listened to and treated with courtesy and empathy;

(b) residents will never be disadvantaged as a result of raising a complaint;

(c) complaints will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, honestly, and openly; and

(d) in dealing with complaints the Charity will comply with confidentiality and data protection policies.

2 Exclusions

2.1 The Chairty must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so.

2.2 The following matters will not be considered as complaints:

(a) The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.

(b) Legal proceedings have begun as defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at Court.

(c) Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

(d) the complainant is anonymous, unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to substantiate the complaint;

2.3 Unless excluded on other grounds, the Charity must accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of issue occurring or the resident becoming aware of the issue. Where there are good reasons to do so, the Charity must also consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside the time limit.

2.4 If a complaint is not accepted a detailed explanation will be provided to the Complainant setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and their right to take that decision to the Ombudsman (see details below). The Ombudsman may direct the Charity to take on the complaint, in which case this policy will apply.

2.5 The Charity reserves the right to close the Complaint in the following circumstances:

(a) If a complaint is pursued unreasonably or where a Complainant's actions or behaviours are deemed to be unreasonable, the Charity reserves the right to close the complaint.

(b) If a Complainant displays threatening or abusive behaviour or language (whether verbal or written), that causes staff or trustees to feel threatened, abused and/or continues to contact the Charity with unreasonable demands during/following a complaint investigation a complaint may be closed and, if the Complainant is a resident, this may be grounds for their appointment to be set aside.

(c) In cases where the trustees bring the complaint to an end in accordance with this section of the policy, they will inform the Complainant of their reasons and their right to take that decision to the Ombudsman (see details below). The Ombudsman may direct the Charity to reopen the complaint, in which case this policy will apply.

3 Accessibility and awareness

3.1 Complaints will be dealt with in a manner that is consistent with the Charity's Equality & Diversity Policy and the Charity's duties under the Equalities Act 2010.

3.2 If any individual making a complaint wishes the Charity to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate an individual's particular needs, they, or their representative, should contact the *nominated lead for Equality & Diversity matters Darron Broughton* whose details are in the Residents' Handbook, by phone or by email or in person to discuss what adjustments may be possible.

3.3 The Charity acknowledges that a high volume of complaints must not be seen as negative, as this can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints procedure. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that residents are unable to complain.

3.4 These complaints handling policy should be listed in the Residents Handbook and available on the Charity's website.

4 Complaint handling staff

4.1 Complaints will be investigated by the Complaints Officer at Stage One.

4.2 Appeals will be investigated by the Appeal Officer at Stage Two.

4.3 If the Complaints Officer and/or the Appeals Officer are conflicted, or the complaint relates to the Complaints Officer and/or the Appeals Officer, the complaint should be directed to the Chair of trustees whose details are in the Residents' Handbook.

5 Stage One of the Complaints Process

5.1 Complaints should be made either in writing or by email to the Complaints Officer.

5.2 The initial complaint should include sufficient detail, and where appropriate supporting documentation, to enable the Charity to investigate the matter.

5.3 The Complaints Officer will acknowledge the complaint and make a record, within 5 working days. The acknowledgement will:

(a) summarise the Charity's understanding of the complaint;

(b) summarise the Charity's understanding of what the Complainant is seeking as an outcome;

(c) raise any questions that require clarification from the Complainant; and

(d) set out the next course of action and anticipated timescale.

5.4 In most cases the Charity will aim to issue a full response within 10 working days from the complaint being acknowledged. In exceptional cases, if the Complaints Officer anticipates that the particular complaint will take longer to resolve, this should be explained and a clear timeframe set out for the resolution of the complaint which should not exceed a further 10 working days, without good reason. Such explanation should also include the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.

5.5 The Complaints Officer will investigate the complaint in an impartial manner permitting all relevant parties to provide information. The Complainant and any third parties involved in the complaint should be given the opportunity to set out their position before any final decision is made. The Complaints Officer may delegate the management and investigation of the complaint to another individual.

5.6 If the Complaints Officer is conflicted, or the complaint relates to the Complaints Officer, the complaint should be directed to the [Chair of trustees] whose details are in the Residents' Handbook.

5.7 The Complaints Officer will:

(a) deal will all complaints on their merits;

(b) act independently and have an open mind but may consider reports of previous complaints that relate to the same issue being complained about;

(c) take appropriate measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest (which may include asking another trustee to investigate the complaint);

(d) consider all relevant information and evidence carefully; and

(e) keep the details of the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only being disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.

5.8 If the complaint involves questions relating to the Charity or the Complainant's legal obligations, the Complaints Officer will set out clearly their understanding of the respective legal obligations and may seek legal advice before doing so.

5.9 The Complaints Officer will provide the Complainant with a response to the complaint at the earliest opportunity, which will be copied to all of the trustees.

5.10 If the Complaints Officer identifies that further actions are required to address the complaint these may be carried out after the response has been given and should not delay the Complainant receiving a response to the complaint.

5.11 If new issues are raised by the Complainant during the stage one process, these should be dealt with as part of the process if they are relevant. However, if the

issues relate to a different issue and/or are raised after the response has already been issued, the issues will be dealt with as a separate complaint.

5.12 In responding to the complaint, the Complaints Officer will confirm in writing:

(a) The complaint stage

(b) The complaint definition

(c) The decision on the complaint

(d) The reasons for any decisions made

(e) The details of any remedy offered to put things right

(f) Details of any outstanding actions; and

(g) Details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the individual is not satisfied with the result.

6 Stage Two

6.1 If the Complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Complaints Officer, they have 5 working days to submit an appeal in writing or by email to the Appeals Officer, whose details can be found in the Residents' Handbook.

6.2 The Appeals Officer will acknowledge the appeal within 5 working days of receipt of the appeal. The acknowledgment may include any requests for clarification that relate to the appeal.

6.3 The Appeals Officer will arrange a meeting with the Complainant to be held within 10 working days of the appeal being submitted. The Appeals Officer will be assisted by two trustees at the meeting the **Appeals Panel**.

6.4 The Appeals Officer will respond in writing to the complainant within 20 working days of the appeal being acknowledged, informing them of the outcome of the appeal process and the decision of the Appeals Panel.

6.5 If the Appeals Officer believes that the appeal will take longer than 20 working days, then any extension should be notified and clearly explained to the Complainant. Any such extension should be no more than 20 working days without good reason. Such explanation should also include the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.

6.6 In responding to the appeal, the Appeals Officer will confirm in writing:

(a) The complaint stage

(b) The complaint definition

(c) The decision on the complaint

(d) The reasons for any decisions made

(e) The details of any remedy offered to put things right

(f) Details of any outstanding actions; and

(g) Details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman if the complainant is not satisfied with the response to the appeal.

7 Putting things right where something has gone wrong

7.1 Where something has gone wrong the Charity must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures, or practices.

7.2 Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the resident as a result of any fault identified.

7.3 The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the resident where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion.

7.4 Charities must take account of the guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

8 Annual Review

8.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

8.2 The Charity will carry out an annual self-assessment in accordance with the Code.

8.3 The Trustees of the Charity as a whole will consider any findings or recommendations of the annual self-assessment.

9 For the purposes of this policy:

(a) The **Complaints Officer** is:

Name: Mr Darron Broughton

Telephone number: 01274 543022

Address: 44 Lily Croft, Heaton Road, Bradford, BD8 8QY

Email address: admin.bth@btconnect.com

(b) The **Appeals Officer** is:

Name: Mr Ian Underwood

Telephone number: 01943 600481

Address: 6 Woodlands Close, Ilkley, Bradford, LS29 9BY

Email address: ianmunderwood@tiscali.co.uk

10 Housing Ombudsman Service

The contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service are:

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service,

PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees

Signature: .....

Name: .....

[CHAIR OF TRUSTEES]

Position: .....

Date: 23rd April 2026

Governor : The Lord Mayor of Bradford
Chairman : Mr IM Underwood
Trust Administrator : Mr. D. D. Broughton

COMMITTEE

Mrs J Carter
Miss B Craig
Mr P Alexander
Mr P Fahy