

# HJALTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## Complaints Policy

### Introduction

Hjaltland Housing Association aims to provide a first class service which meets customer needs. However there may be occasions when a customer feels dissatisfied with the service received and this policy will give them the opportunity to let the Association know and ask for explanation, feedback, apology and/or redress.

The policy aims to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, to the service user's satisfaction wherever possible and appropriate.

Complaints will be valued and the lessons learned from them will be used to drive service quality improvements. Positive feedback and comments will also be used to ensure that we continue to perform where customers are happy with our service.

Our complaints policy will comply with legislation and best practice including the SPSO guidance "A Model Complaints Handling Procedure".

### Who can complain?

Anyone who receives or requests a service from the Hjaltland Housing Association can make a complaint. This includes tenants, people applying for housing and people living in property which is in the neighbourhood of Association properties. All of these people are deemed customers of the Association.

Where a customer is unable or reluctant to make a complaint we will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

### What can be complained about?

Hjaltland will be very clear about classifying complaints as 'complaints' and not 'feedback or 'comments'. Frontline staff taking telephone calls and emails will ensure that any expressions of dissatisfaction fitting the agreed definition of a complaint will be dealt with as a complaint.

Any aspect of service can be complained about e.g.

- failure to provide a service such as a repair which has not been carried out;
- inadequate standard of service;
- not receiving information which has been asked for;
- the attitude or approach of members of staff or contractors which has not been reasonable;
- an application for housing which has not been handled properly;
- unfairness or prejudice in the way in which the service was delivered;
- dissatisfaction with a particular policy;
- failure to follow policy or procedures;
- delay in responding to enquiries or requests;

This list is not exhaustive but provides examples of what constitutes a complaint.

Last Reviewed: November 2018  
Next Review: 2021 and every three years thereafter

# HJALTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## Complaints Policy

Complaints will be dealt with courteously and sympathetically. However there will be occasions when it will not be possible to give all the information requested. For example, it would be wrong to discuss details of someone else's housing application as this would result in a breach of confidentiality.

## What is not a complaint?

Asking for an explanation of a policy or an initial request for a service will not be considered a complaint (for example a repair request). A request for compensation only will not be treated as a complaint but will be considered under the appropriate procedures.

An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or appealing a decision should not be deemed as complaints, neither shall issues that are in, or have been heard by a court or tribunal.

## Anonymous complaints

All complaints are valued and treated equally. An anonymous complaint will be considered if there is enough information to enable us to make further enquiries.

If the complaint does not provide sufficient information we may decide not to pursue it further.

## Management of complaints

### FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

Hjaltland Housing Association will resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity and this will mean that in most instances complaints will be dealt with at the frontline.

All members of staff will be able to address the complaint or refer it to the appropriate point for frontline resolution without it first going to management.

Frontline complaints will be dealt with immediately or for those where a staff member needs to find out more before responding they will be dealt with within **5 working days**.

### INVESTIGATION

Where frontline resolution is not appropriate or has been attempted and failed then the complaint will move to the investigation stage. All complaints must be acknowledged within **3 working days**.

Inappropriate complaints for frontline resolution would be those involving complex issues and requiring detailed investigation or where the complaint that relates to issues that have been identified as serious or high risk/high profile, or related to a complaint about a member of staff.

The complaint will be investigated and the outcome advised within **20 working days**.

### REDRESS

The approach to redress will be consistent but adaptable to the specific circumstances of each complaint. Redress may be in the form of:

Last Reviewed: November 2018  
Next Review: 2021 and every three years thereafter

# HJALTLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

## Complaints Policy

- an explanation;
- an apology;
- reinstatement; or
- compensation.

### CLOSING COMPLAINTS

The customer must be informed of the outcome of their complaint in writing (or by their preferred method of contact) within the stipulated timescales.

It should be made clear that the customer has the right to ask the SPSO to consider the complaint while also providing contact details for the SPSO and the time limit for doing so. The SPSO will not normally consider an appeal more than 12 months after the event being complained about.

### EXTENSION TO TIMESCALES

In exceptional circumstances, and where there are clear and justifiable reasons for doing so, an extension may be agreed with the customer.

For frontline resolution this extension should not be more than **5 working days** and should only be considered if the extension will allow the complaint to be resolved at this stage.

Where an investigation cannot be concluded within the 20 day deadline, for example, where complaints are so complex or require detailed information from a third party then an extension of **20 working days** can be agreed. If the customer refuses to accept the extension then the Chief Executive must consider the case and decide whether there is justification for an extension and the customer will be notified of the decision.

### External Review/Appeal

Once the investigation stage has been concluded and the customer has been informed of the decision they have the right to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) if they remain dissatisfied.

In the case of those making a complaint associated with a service registered with the care inspectorate e.g. sheltered tenants, service users of the Hub or our outreach service will also have the right to complain to the Care Inspectorate.

If the complaint is about the Association's factoring service then appeals will be heard by the Homeowners Housing Panel.

### Record Keeping

Complaints can provide invaluable feedback and can be used to improve services. It is important that all complaints are accurately recorded in a systematic way to allow them to be analysed and reported on a regular basis.

### Policy Review

Copies of this Policy are available on request and free of charge from the Association office. The Association reviews this Policy on a regular basis to make sure that the aims of the Policy are being achieved.

Last Reviewed: November 2018  
Next Review: 2021 and every three years thereafter