

Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

1. Aim

1.1 This Policy sets out the organisation's approach to offering a simple and accessible process for providing feedback and ensures that any complaints are dealt with in a fair, impartial and consistent manner when things go wrong. It also sets out our approach for welcoming, responding to and learning from any other form of feedback we receive across a range of communication channels – letter, telephone, email, online, social media etc.

1.2 We aim to:

- a. Encourage feedback, both positive and negative
- b. Resolve complaints , quickly and sensitively
- c. Resolve complaints at the first point of contact, wherever possible
- d. Learn from comments, complaints, compliments to help us improve our services
- e. Publish, promote and monitor performance against agreed service standards

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all feedback received from any person using or directly affected by a service we deliver.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Onward colleagues are trained and welcome all comments, compliments and complaints. We accept feedback from you in a number of different ways. You can:

- a. Telephone us
- b. Post reviews on social media platforms
- c. Email us
- d. Complete the online form on our website www.onward.co.uk
- e. Visiting one of our offices (where available to do so)
- f. Write to us

4. How we deal with complaints

4.1 We are committed to providing you with an excellent quality of service, treating your views with respect and fairness at all times. If you are not happy with any part of service, you can complain to us and we'll try to put it right.

4.2 You may want to complain if you feel we have:

- a. Failed to follow our policies or procedures
- b. Done something that we should not have done
- c. Failed to deliver a service in line with our agreed standards

4.3 However, a complaint is not:

- a. An initial request for a service, such as a first report of a repair
- b. A request for information or an explanation of policy or practise
- c. An appeal against an action resulting in court proceedings or matters subject to ongoing court proceedings
- d. Or matters we consider to be legal claims

- 4.4 We will be unable to investigate complaints over six months old, unless there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances.

5. Initial Contact

- 5.1 We ask customers to get in touch with us straight away if something has gone wrong and give us the opportunity to put it right. We train our staff to resolve a complaint as quickly as possible, and where possible, the first time you contact us about it.
- 5.2 If the member of staff receiving the complaint considers that they cannot resolve it there and then, they will formally log it and refer to the relevant service area for investigation. This is also the way we will deal with complaints sent directly to the Chief Executive or Chair.
- 5.3 We record all such contact to identify underlying causes and emerging trends in service failure or dissatisfaction.

6. Investigation

- 6.1 If your complaint is complex and requires an investigation, we will refer it to the relevant member of staff who will then contact you within two working days to establish a resolution and agree a timescale. We will check whether any support is required and we will explain the procedure.
- 6.2 It is expected that most complaints can be resolved within 10 working days but there may be times when it is necessary to agree a longer timescale. We will agree this with you.
- 6.3 We will provide a full and thorough response within the agreed timescale and we will use digital methods (email, telephone, SMS text for example) where appropriate to communicate with you.

7. Review

- 7.1 Our aim is always to deal with your complaint thoroughly and to your satisfaction. If you feel that we have not properly considered the complaint, you may ask for a further review by contacting us and explaining the reasons you remain dissatisfied and wish for the matter to be considered by us again.
- 7.2 When we receive a request to review a complaint, we will acknowledge it within two working days and your complaint will then be considered and reviewed by a service Director. Again, we will aim to provide you with a full response within 10 working days.

8. Unreasonable and Frequent Complaints

- 8.1 Generally, the complaints we receive are made in good faith and because customers are genuinely unhappy with an element of our services. However, sometimes when the complaint is first lodged or when we are chased for a response it can be in an abusive or aggressive way. If customers act in this way, after we have made every effort to resolve their complaint, we reserve the right in extreme circumstances to no longer respond. We will not accept threatening or offensive behaviour towards our staff.

9. Compensation and/or Ex Gratia Payments

- 9.1 Compensation and/or ex gratia payments, may be considered, where appropriate.

10. Designated Persons

- 10.1 If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint, once we have exhausted our internal process, you may choose to refer your complaint to a

‘designated person’. This designated person could be any MP or a local councillor within the district you live.

- 10.2 Alternatively, you may refer your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman, the details of which are noted below:

Housing Ombudsman Service, Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London, E14 9GE

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Minicom: 020 7404 7092

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

11. Responsibility and Monitoring

11.1 The Customer Services Director is responsible for ensuring:

- a. This policy is complied with
- b. Is reviewed annually to ensure we are meeting any regulatory requirements and that we adopt best practice

11.2 Compliance is reported to and monitored by Board, Committees and our operational management teams.

Linked documents:	
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Date implemented:	
Policy lead:	Chris Radford, Insight Manager
Approved by:	Finance and Performance Committee
Approved on:	June 2018
Next review date:	June 2019

Reference number:	COMP01
Version:	2.1
Document replaces:	Complaints policies of Contour Housing, Hyndburn Homes, Liverpool Housing Trust, Peak Valley HA and Ribble Valley HA