Complaints and Feedback Policy

Version Number	6.2
Date Applies From	02/09/2026
Policy Owner	Executive Director of Customer
Next Review Date	02/09/2029
Strategy Link	Customer Strategy – customer focused and equitable services.

Key connected legislation/regulation:

- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024
- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 including Awaab's Law
- The Building Safety Act 2022
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Housing Act 1985 and 1996
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards

Annual Checks

Policy owners should ensure that an annual check of hyperlinks, roles, and names is undertaken. These checks are in addition to formal review process. Please see Policy and Procedure framework guidance for further details.

If you need this information in an alternative language please call

0161 605 7260

For other formats please call

0300 123 5522

Introduction

We aim to provide high quality services and welcome all feedback, both positive and negative. We actively encourage feedback, recognising compliments and complaints as valuable insight to improve services. Our approach ensures customers feel heard, with complaints handled in an accessible, fair and transparent way. We aim to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity, without restricting access to the formal complaints process.

We are committed to complying with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code ("the Code") and to meeting the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard.

Definitions

Complaint
A complaint is defined as "an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of services, actions or lack of action by ForHousing, its own colleagues, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a customer or group of customers."

Service Request
ForHousing will not treat service requests as complaints. A service request is a request from a customer requiring action to be taken to put something right, for example a request for a repair, reporting a neighbourhood issue or anti-social behaviour. We record service requests separately to complaints, and we monitor and review them regularly. If a service request is not dealt with appropriately, the customer can raise this as a formal complaint under this policy.

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. Raising a complaint will not prevent, delay or otherwise impact actions required to resolve the service request.

Compliment
A compliment is an expression of gratitude for a service provided on or on behalf of ForHousing.

Who can make a complaint?

Any person using ForHousing services can make a complaint. This includes customers of ForHousing owned properties, leaseholders, and shared owners. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or an advocate will be handled in line with this policy.

You can also authorise a representative to make a complaint on your behalf. This could be a friend, partner, relative or someone from an external organisation. If you would like someone to act on your behalf, let us know. We need your consent to share details with your representative.

Where a complaint is made by a group of residents or any other group of people, in order to handle the complaint efficiently, we will ask for a single point of contact to be nominated.

The customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. We accept

complaints within twelve months of the event or within 12 months of the customer becoming aware of the issue and will use discretion where there are good reasons to do so (see exclusions).

When we receive an expression of dissatisfaction, we will seek to distinguish whether it is a complaint or a service request. We will assess all expressions of dissatisfaction to determine whether they meet the definition of a complaint in line with the Code. If it is unclear whether an expression of dissatisfaction is intended as a complaint, we will be proactive in clarifying this with the customer.

An expression of dissatisfaction made within a survey will be treated as a service request or comment; however, the customer will be made aware of how to pursue a complaint if required.

Who can make a compliment?

We encourage all kinds of feedback, anyone who has a relationship with ForHousing can compliment an employee, team or the organisation. We will review compliments alongside complaints and identify good practice.

Compliments are logged, recorded, and shared via our operational performance reporting. We ensure the details are passed on to the relevant employee and their line manager, so that the recognition can be acknowledged. We welcome receipt of compliments about our employees and services.

Exclusions

We will consider each complaint on its own merits and consider the individual circumstances. We will not unreasonably refuse to accept a complaint and will evidence decisions in line with the Code. There will be exceptional situations when a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, which could include:

- An initial request for a service, e.g. first reporting of a repair, which will be dealt with as a service request.
- Reports of anti-social behaviour or breaches of tenancy.
- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurring over twelve months ago, or within 12 months of the individual becoming aware of the issue however, we will apply discretion to this where there are good reasons to do so.
- Closed complaints which have previously been raised and have already been considered under ForHousing's Complaints Policy.
- Where the HOS has already determined the outcome of an investigation.
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Insurance matters where an insurance claim has been made e.g. damages or personal injury.
- Complaints about services, persons, or bodies which ForHousing has no control.
- Where there is criminal or fraudulent investigation involved.
- Anonymous complaints and those from non-ForHousing customers will be recorded, depending on the issue we may still investigate outside of this policy.

If ForHousing decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree that the

exclusion has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may advise ForHousing to investigate the complaint.

We will keep a record of complaints that have been refused and will include a summary of the volumes and types of complaints that have been refused in our annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement report.

Accessibility and Awareness

We will take proactive steps to ensure customers are aware of how to make a complaint, including through multiple communication channels and regular promotion. Information on how to complain and the complaints process will be provided in clear, accessible formats and languages as required. Complaints can be made using the following channels:

- Our website – Homepage - ForHousing and then navigate to the complaints and feedback page Complaints and feedback - ForHousing
- If you have downloaded the My account + app, you can report a complaint and will be redirected to our website to log the details of your complaint.
- By emailing hello@forhousing.co.uk
- By writing to 52 Regent Street, Eccles, M30 0BP
- Over the phone by calling 0300 123 5522
- In person by calling into our Regent Street office in Eccles, M30 0BP, Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm or our Stockbridge Village office, L28 1NR, open Monday and Wednesday 11am – 2pm.
- Customers can raise a complaint with any member of ForHousing colleagues or appointed contractors. All colleagues will be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass your complaint to the Complaints Team.

We encourage you to contact the Complaints Team at complaintsco@forhousing.co.uk if you believe that we can make reasonable adjustments to enable you to fully access our complaints service. We will agree with you about what may be reasonable based on your individual needs.

ForHousing will publicise details of the Complaints and Feedback Policy, including information about the Ombudsman and its Code on their website. Throughout the whole complaint process ForHousing will provide customers with information on their right to access and engage with the Ombudsman Service about their complaint. Details of the Ombudsman Service are included in the Stage 1 and Stage 2, extension and outcome letters.

Housing Ombudsman Service

An independent, impartial, and free service for social housing residents, to investigate complaints and resolve disputes involving the tenants and leaseholders of social landlords.

The Housing Ombudsman Service can also provide advice and support in relation to complaints. The details of how to access their services are provided on our website, in complaint outcome letters, the link to their website is included here: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Housing Ombudsman Service contact details:

Housing Ombudsman Service PO Box 1484 Unit D Preston PR2 0ET
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Scope of Policy

This policy provides the framework for handling complaints and compliments. We will not treat customers differently if they complain. The early and local resolution of issues between ForHousing and our customers is key to effective complaint handling.

Complaint Handling Colleagues

ForHousing have a designated team, of complaint handlers, assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent). The complaint handlers have access to colleagues at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. In addition, they have authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.

We prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All colleagues are suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling.

The Complaint Handling Process

We operate a two-stage complaints process. Each complaint has a named owner responsible for communication and progression. We will maintain full and accurate records of complaints, including decisions, actions and outcomes, to ensure transparency and accountability.

When a complaint is logged at Stage 1 or escalated to Stage 2, ForHousing will set out our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes the customer is seeking. This is referred to as “the complaint definition.” If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will make reasonable efforts to agree the complaint definition with the customer.

With every complaint we will:

- Listen to the customer and understand the reasons for their complaint, requesting clarification where required.
- Establish the outcomes the customer is seeking.
- Thank the customer for their feedback.
- Note all the facts on our system.
- Be clear on what we can and cannot do for the customer – we will never make false promises to a customer.
- Clearly explain the complaints process

At each stage of the complaints process, the complaint handlers will:

- deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind.
- give the resident a fair chance to set out their position.
- take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- and consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.

Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this policy, ForHousing will agree with the customer suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.

A full record will be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This will include the original complaint, and the date received, all correspondence with the customer, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.

ForHousing will ensure appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.

ForHousing has a policy and procedure in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from customers and/or their representatives. Please see Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.

We will consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation. We will consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the customer is vulnerable or at risk. Most Stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly with an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the customer.

On receiving a complaint, we will:

Complaint Acknowledgement (Stage 1 and Stage 2)

ForHousing will acknowledge, define and log the complaint within 5 working days of receiving the complaint, with the next working day being 'day one'. For complaints received outside of normal office hours, the received date is the next working day.

The acknowledgement will be sent in writing. The acknowledgement will include a summary of the complaint including any outcomes the customer may be seeking and will inform the customer of who will be conducting the investigation. We will be clear about which aspects of the complaint we are and are not responsible for investigating and clarifying any areas where this is not clear. We will clearly confirm the outcomes the customer is seeking within the acknowledgment.

Stage 1

ForHousing will issue a full response to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. If an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint, we will inform the customer of the expected timescale for response. Any extension will only be applied in exceptional circumstances and will not exceed 10 working days, in line with the Code, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the customer, the date they can expect to receive a response. The customer will be provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service and advised of their right to approach the Ombudsman if extension timescales exceed those stated by the Code.

The complaint investigator will fully investigate the complaint by obtaining all the facts relating to the complaint. They may carry out one or more of the following actions to investigate the complaint:

- Approach the customer for further details about their complaint that may assist with the process.
- Identify any customer vulnerabilities or risk factors that may need to be considered.
- Speak to relevant colleagues or contractors.
- Search our internal systems for records relating to the customer complaint.
- A complaint response will be provided to the customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed.

Outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. The response will address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law, and good practice where appropriate.

Where customers raise additional complaints during the investigation, these will be incorporated into the Stage 1 response if they are related, and the Stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the Stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues will be logged as a new complaint.

The written complaint response to the customer at the completion of Stage 1 will be in clear, plain language and include:

- 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;
- an apology when we have done something wrong;
- details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response and
- contact details of the Ombudsman should the customer wish to seek further advice regarding their complaint.

Stage 2

If the customer remains dissatisfied, the complaint will be reviewed at Stage 2 by a different investigator. The Stage 2 investigator will not have had any prior involvement in the Stage 1 investigation.

Customers are not required to explain their reasons for requesting Stage 2. ForHousing will make reasonable efforts to understand why a customer remains unhappy as part of its Stage 2 response.

We will issue a final response to Stage 2 within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. If an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint, we will inform the customer of the expected timescale for response. Any extension will only be applied in exceptional circumstances and will not exceed 20 working days, in line with the Code, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the customer. The customer will be provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman Service and advised of their right to approach the Ombudsman if extension timescales exceed those stated by the Code.

A complaint response will be provided to the customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed.

Outstanding actions will be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the resident. The response will address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

The written complaint response to the customer at the completion of Stage 2 will be in clear, plain language and include:

- 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;
- an apology when we have done something wrong;
- details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied and
- contact details of the Ombudsman should the customer wish to seek further advice regarding their complaint.

Putting Things Right

Where something has gone wrong ForHousing will acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. This can happen at any stage of the process, without the need for escalation. 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.

Any remedy will reflect the impact on the customer because of any fault identified and take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman. The remedy offer will clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the customer where appropriate. Any remedy proposed will be followed through to completion.

Any financial remedy will be offered in conjunction with the ForHousing Remedies and Compensation Policy.

Customer feedback

ForHousing values the customer feedback that we receive and we will use this feedback as follows:

- To spot trends from complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction and use this information on a large scale to inform our approach to our services, train our colleagues and how we direct our resources.
- Maintain records of lessons learned within complaints and produce/review an action plan.
- Share information on lessons learned across the business to maximise the impact and benefit.
- Publish details of how we have improved our services because of learning from complaints.
- Use customer compliments to identify cases of excellent customer service to inform our approach on how we train our colleagues and deliver our services.

ForHousing will ask our customers if they are satisfied with our complaints handling, via a transactional survey, and we will use this feedback to improve the service. We will continue to compare our complaints service with other organisations to improve the quality of our service.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

We use complaint data to identify disparities in outcomes and to improve fairness and equity in service delivery. Where required, we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure customers are not disadvantaged.

- We will monitor complaint outcomes across customer groups, including those with protected characteristics.
- Investigate and address any identified inequalities or disproportionate outcomes.
- Record and report on actions taken and improvements achieved.

This Policy supports transparency, consistency and impartiality in complaint handling. The systematic collection and analysis of complaint data enables us to identify under- or over-representation and take proportionate action.

We use learning from complaints to drive service improvements, strengthen accountability and deliver more equitable outcomes for customers.

We are committed to providing services that are fair, inclusive and accessible. We meet our obligations under equality legislation and regulatory expectations and seek to go beyond compliance.

We actively work to:

- Remove barriers to equal access and participation.
- Prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Promote equality of opportunity across our services and workforce.

Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to providing excellent customer services, which are fair, equitable and inclusive. As such, we will endeavour to understand and make any reasonable adjustments required for customers in line with ForHousing's Reasonable Adjustment Statement and the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment provided will be recorded and kept under active review.

Examples of reasonable adjustments we might make include providing a translator or information in a different format.

Implementation and Communication

Policy Review

This Policy will be communicated to all affected colleagues and published on ForHousing's intranet resources page. Training will be provided where it is necessary to support understanding and implementation.

This Policy will also be made available on the ForHousing website.

The Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are significant changes to regulation, legislation, operations, or best practice that warrant an earlier review.

Learning from Complaints and Compliments

We recognise the importance of learning from complaints and compliments and value the opportunities they provide to drive continuous improvement in service delivery. In line with the Code and the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards, we are committed to openness, accountability, and using feedback to improve outcomes for customers.
Where we identify that we have not met expected standards, we will:

- ✓ Identify, document, and analyse lessons learned, including root causes.
- ✓ Log and track actions arising from complaints and compliments to ensure delivery and oversight.
- ✓ Record, collate, and share learning and improvements both internally and externally.

We will ensure that learning from complaints and compliments are embedded across the organisation, with clear ownership, defined timescales, and robust monitoring arrangements. Senior leadership and governing bodies (or equivalent) will have visibility of complaint trends, outcomes, and associated actions to ensure effective scrutiny and assurance.

We will use both complaints and compliments to identify patterns, trends, and emerging risks, and to inform service improvements. We will regularly review root causes to identify systemic issues and take proactive steps to prevent recurrence.

We will clearly demonstrate to customers how their feedback has influenced change, ensuring that tenants are informed, involved, and empowered. We will evidence how complaints have led to service improvements and will report this publicly, including through our annual complaint performance and service improvement reporting, in line with regulatory expectations.

Monitoring, Recording, Reporting

Scrutiny and Oversight

We will produce an annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, which will be published on our website alongside the Customer Committee's response. This ensures transparency and demonstrates how complaints are used to improve services.

The Housing Ombudsman requires us to complete an annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code ("the Code"). Additional self-assessments will be completed following any significant organisational changes, including restructures, mergers, or material changes to procedures.

Where we are unable to comply with elements of the Code due to exceptional circumstances (for example, a cyber incident), we will:

- ✓ Notify the Housing Ombudsman
- ✓ Inform affected residents.
- ✓ Publish details on our website.
- ✓ Provide a clear timescale for returning to compliance.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

Complaints will be recorded within the housing management system (QL) and reported through a Power BI dashboard, accessible to teams and managers across ForHousing to support transparency and effective performance management.

Complaints form part of the organisation's key performance indicators and are routinely reported through established governance arrangements.

Satisfaction with complaint handling is measured through Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) and is collected and reported in line with regulatory requirements.

Regular audits will be undertaken to ensure compliance with this Policy, associated procedures, and relevant guidance.

We will publish information annually within the Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, including:

- ✓ The number and nature of complaints received.
- ✓ Complaint outcomes and key themes.
- ✓ Performance against target timescales.
- ✓ Lessons learned and service improvements implemented.

We are committed to ensuring that this information is clear, accessible and demonstrates how customer feedback drives service improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities
Clear accountability is established to support effective complaint handling and oversight:

Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC):
A member of the governing body (ForHousing Board) appointed to provide strategic oversight, challenge, and assurance on complaint handling, and to promote a positive complaint handling culture. This role is currently fulfilled by a Board member who also chairs the Customer Committee.

Senior Lead Person:
A senior manager accountable for complaint handling across the organisation. This role includes identifying trends, systemic issues, risks, and any required changes to policies or procedures. The Executive Director of Customer currently holds this role.

Complaint Handling Lead:
Responsible for ensuring operational compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code and overseeing the effective delivery of complaint handling processes. The Director of Central Services currently holds this role.

Complaints and Feedback Panel:
An involved customer panel that reviews complaint trends, learning outcomes, and performance, ensuring compliance with this Policy and making recommendations for service improvements.

The governing body (or equivalent) will receive regular reports on complaint performance, service improvements, and compliance with regulatory requirements, ensuring effective oversight and assurance. We will align complaints performance with wider service performance, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), to support transparency and accountability.

Related Documents

- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy
- Unacceptable Behaviour Procedure
- Reasonable Adjustment Statement
- Remedies and Compensation Policy
- Complaints Guidance
- Compliments Guidance
- STAIRS Policy

Co-production

The Policy has been developed with colleagues across several ForHousing service areas. Involved customers have also reviewed the Policy in conjunction with the annual self-assessment to provide scrutiny that we are compliant with The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

Approval & Review History

With effect from 23/10/2024 the approval route for the Complaints Policy is:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) - Executive Management Team (EMT) - Customer Committee

Date	Version	Approved by	Detail
15/11/2022	1	N/A	Previously ForHousing Redress Policy
24/02/2023	2	N/A	• Clarification on legal action • Removal of service request
10/05/2023	3	N/A	• Updated exclusions including legal action position. • Removed my account option to make a complaint as replaced by online form. • Added targets for Stage 1 acknowledgement from calendar to working days and added acknowledgement for Stage 2 escalation. • Added options to confirm if tenant wants to make a complaint when they are dissatisfied. • Removed designated person option. • Clarified tenant involvement role in complaints. The above has been informed by a meeting with the Housing Ombudsman Service on 4.5.23.
11/05/2023	4	ED Customer	Reasonable adjustment examples added.
30/04/2024	5	ED Customer	Revised policy to comply with Housing Ombudsman new Handling Code (April 2024)
29/07/2024	5.1	ED Customer	Inclusion of paragraph related to reasonable adjustment statement of intent.
28/02/2025	5.2	ED Customer	Inclusion of a second paragraph regarding Service Requests.

Date	Version	Approved by	Detail
18/09/2025	6	Customer Committee	Annual review and new policy template. SLT (14/07/25) – EMT (30/07/25)
28/01/2026	6.1	ED Customer	Updated version noted by Customer Committee (19/02/26) following second policy review undertaken by HOS.
02/09/2026	6.2	Customer Committee	Annual review and addition of managing compliments to the scope of this policy. SLT (24/08/26) – EMT (01/09/26)