

T3 Residential Limited

Complaints Policy

1 Introduction

1.1. T3 Residential Limited ("**T3 Residential**") is committed to providing high quality customer service. We acknowledge that there may be occasions when we do not meet the high standards we expect of ourselves. We welcome the feedback of anyone who has had an interaction with us or used our services and take seriously any form of complaint. We will try, wherever possible, to resolve a complaint to the customer's satisfaction.

1.2. This policy explains how we will respond to complaints.

2 Legal and Regulatory Responsibilities (not exhaustive)

2.1 This policy is aligned with the following legislative and regulatory requirements:

- Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard;
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023;
- Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code ("**CHC**"); and
- Building Safety Act 2022.

3 Scope and Objectives

3.1 This policy sets out T3 Residential's approach to handling complaints.

3.2 The policy applies to all tenants of T3 Residential and contractors and partner agencies delivering services on our behalf.

3.3 This policy does not apply to any complaints that staff or contractors wish to raise. These will be dealt with under our contracts and HR policies.

3.4 Tenants may nominate a representative to act on their behalf. Reference in this policy to tenant also refers to their representatives.

4 Definitions

4.1 In this policy, we apply the following definitions:

4.2 **Complainant** – any customer who make a 'complaint' about T3 Residential and our services.

4.3 **Complaint** - 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 tenant or group of tenants.

4.4 **Service request** – A service request is a first-time request received from a tenant, or their representative, for T3 Residential to put something right, deliver a service or to provide information or explanation. These are not treated as complaints. We will record, monitor and review service requests and ensure that the tenants knows that their contact is being treated as a service request.

4.5 **Complaints Officer** – the person responsible for complaints within T3 Residential. They will ensure that complaints are handled in line with this policy and the CHC. They will have access to people at all levels of the organisation to ensure complaints are handled fairly and effectively and will keep accurate and complete records for each complaint.

4.6 **Member Responsible for Complaints (“MRC”)** – Member of our governing body who is nominated to have lead responsibility for complaints.

4.7 **Lead person for complaints** – we will nominate a lead person for complaints who is accountable for complaint handling within T3 Residential.

4.8 **Housing Ombudsman Service** – a service provided to all tenants of registered providers of social housing, providing an independent, impartial complaint resolution service.

5 **Our approach**

5.1 We will raise a complaint when a tenant expresses dissatisfaction with our response to a service request. We will continue to try and resolve the service request whilst the complaint is ongoing. The tenant does not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such. We will ensure that the tenant knows that their contact is being treated as a complaint.

5.2 All complaints will be addressed fairly, effectively and promptly.

5.3 We will ensure that our complaint service is accessible to tenants through:

- Making it easy for tenants to raise a complaint through different channels;
- Making reasonable adjustments for tenants in our complaint handling to assist and support those with diverse needs and respecting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010;
- Publishing our Complaint Policy on our website and providing a copy if requested;
- Publishing documents in line with the requirements under the CHC section 8; and
- Providing details of the Housing Ombudsman Service to our tenants at appropriate stages during the process including where we refuse to accept a complaint, where there is a delay in our response to a complaint to timescales outside of those permitted under the CHC and where tenants wish to escalate a complaint.

6 **Exclusions**

6.1 We will not consider a complaint in the following circumstance:

- It is a service request;
- The issue occurred or the tenant became aware of it over twelve months ago;
- The issue has already been dealt with under this policy;
- Legal proceedings have already commenced;
- The issue is being resolved through other means for example an insurance claim; or
- It is regarding a service that we are not responsible for.

6.2 We will not apply a blanket exclusion but will consider each case on its own merit. When we refuse a complaint, we will:

- Notify the tenant promptly and explain the reasons;
- Provide details of the Housing Ombudsman Service; and
- Keep a record of all refused complaints for reporting purposes.

7 **Complaints Process**

7.1 We will operate a two-stage complaint process. At each stage, we will deal with each complaint on its merit reviewing the complaint and not the complainant, have an open mind, give tenants the opportunity to explain their position and consider all information and evidence carefully and fully. We will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and record these.

7.2 At each stage we will confirm with the resident, the details of their complaint, and reasonable adjustments required, our understanding of their dissatisfaction and the resolution they are

seeking.

7.3 **Stage 1**

7.4 We will log each new complaint and acknowledge it within five working days.

7.5 The complaint will be investigated by Housing Manager.

7.6 We will issue a full response to the complaint within ten working days. Where the complaint is complex and we are unable to complete the investigation within the timeframe, we will contact the tenant and advise that an extension is needed and the reasons for the extension and will provide details of the Housing Ombudsman Service. Any extension will be for a maximum of a further ten working days.

7.7 We will send the complaint response as soon as we have the answers rather than waiting for all the actions to be delivered. We will address all the points in the complaints, advise of our decision and explain the reasons. Our responses will be compliant in content with the expectations in the CHC. We will advise the tenant how they can escalate the complaint to the next stage if they are not satisfied.

7.8 If a tenant raises further complaints during the investigation, we will investigate and incorporated into the stage 1 unless the issues are unrelated, the response has already been sent, or it would cause an unreasonable delay in the process. They may be logged as a new complaint.

7.9 **Stage 2**

7.10 If the complaint is not resolved to the tenant's satisfaction, they may escalate the complaint to the next stage of our process. The tenant does not have to provide a reason why they are requesting the escalation and we will work to identify why they remain dissatisfied.

7.11 The stage 2 review will be undertaken by someone not involved in the stage 1 investigation.

7.12 We will issue a full response to the complaint within 20 working days. Where the complaint is complex and we are unable to complete the investigation within the timeframe, we will contact the tenant and advise that an extension is needed and the reasons for the extension and will provide details of the Housing Ombudsman Service. Any extension will be for a maximum of a further 20 working days.

7.13 We will send the complaint response as soon as we have the answers rather than waiting for all the actions to be delivered. We will address all the points in the complaints, advise of our decision and explain the reasons. Our responses will be compliant in content with the expectations in the CHC.

7.14 If a tenant raises further complaints during the investigation, these will be investigated and incorporated into the stage 2 unless the issues are unrelated, the response has already been sent or it would cause an unreasonable delay in the process. In these circumstances, they may be logged as a new complaint.

7.15 In the stage 2 response, we will provide details of the Housing Ombudsman Service as the next stage if the tenant remains dissatisfied.

7.16 At each stage, we will detail to the tenant the actions we are taking to put the matter right and by when, as and when appropriate. All actions will be recorded and tracked to ensure they are completed in line with the promises made in the complaint response.

8 **Compensation and Redress**

8.1 Where appropriate, compensation and redress will be assessed and awarded in line with our Compensation Policy.

8.2 The manager who has completed the investigation is responsible for ensuring that any compensation or redress is delivered in line with the offer and acceptance by the resident.

9 **Housing Ombudsman Service**

9.1 If we receive contact from the Housing Ombudsman confirming that they are investigating a complaint, the complaints officer will provide all the information required by the deadline prescribed. They will notify the Housing Manager that a complaint is being investigated by the Housing Ombudsman.

9.2 When a determination is received, the complaints officer will notify the executive team and the MRC with the outcome. The officer will record all actions required in the determination and monitor their delivery to completion and update the Housing Ombudsman, as required.

10 **Behaviour Expectation**

10.1 We will ensure that all tenants are dealt with fairly, appropriately and professionally including when making a complaint. However, on occasions tenants may demonstrate behaviour that is considered unreasonable as it could include harassment, or the complaint being malicious or vexatious. This includes, but not limited to, threats to staff, repeatedly raising the same complaint, excessive requests for information, malicious, exaggerated or unfounded complaints against staff or other tenants, hate speak against staff.

10.2 Such cases will be referred to a senior manager of the service area for review, who, if they agree that the behaviour is unreasonable, may take proportionate actions or apply restrictions, giving regards to the Equality Act 2010. These can include, but not limited to, restricted contact including in writing only, through a third party, single point of contact, reduced contact or may result in legal action being taken.

10.3 This will not affect the tenant's right to have their complaints investigated under this policy. However, it may affect how we can deliver redress for the complaint, as appropriate.

11 **Lessons Learned**

11.1 We will use our complaints data to learn from our complaints and improve service delivery, and this includes where complaints are not upheld. We will review the root cause of complaints and lessons learned on a quarterly basis to identify themes in issues and where there are opportunities for improvement.

11.2 These will be reported monthly to the Lead for Complaints and quarterly to managers who are responsible to ensuring that the relevant improvements are implemented within their department.

11.3 Where a major failing is identified, lessons learned may be communicated to managers promptly to oversee immediate change.

11.4 Complaints data will be reported to board biannually including the number and types of complaints, performance in complaint handling and lessons learned and actions taken to implement the identified changes.

11.5 The annual Complaint Handling Performance and Service Improvement report will be reported to the board prior to it being submitted to the Housing Ombudsman and published on our website (when available).

11.6 The reporting frequency will be reviewed should we see a significant increase in the number of

complaints received. More complaints will require greater oversight.

12 Publications

12.1 On our website we will publish:

- Our Complaints Policy;
- Our Annual Complaint Handling Performance and Service Improvement report with all required accompanying documents as prescribed in the CHC;
- Details of the Housing Ombudsman Service;
- Information on lessons learned and changes that have been made as a result of complaints; and
- Information on how to raise a complaint.

13 Higher Risk Buildings

13.1 T3 Residential will host a separate complaint process for tenants in higher risk buildings (“HRBs”), in compliance with the Building Safety Act 2022.

13.2 Through the complaint process, tenants in HRBs (buildings at least 18 metres high or seven storeys with at least two residential units) can raise complaints about the performance of an accountable person or principal accountable person or concerns about building safety risks. These are called ‘relevant complaints’.

13.3 The accountable persons will ensure that all tenants in HRBs know how to raise a relevant complaint detailing how to make a complaint, what a relevant complaint is and what tenants should expect when a complaint is raised.

13.4 We will apply the same process to these complaints as detailed above, with the two-stage process and response times.

13.5 If a tenant is not satisfied with the final response, or they have not received a response, or there are unresolved issues, they can refer their case to the Building Safety Regulator. If the Building Safety Regulator confirms that the complaint is a relevant complaint, they will complete an investigation. If it is not a relevant complaint, they will confirm this and signpost the complainant to another appropriate regulator.

14 Policy Review

14.1 The board is responsible for ensuring this policy is kept up to date, implemented within the organisation and monitored and evaluated.

14.2 The policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently as a result of an incident occurring, feedback obtained, internal/external audits and change in legislation or regulation. This process ensures the policy continues to be appropriate, adequate and effective.

15 Background Documents

15.1 This policy should be read in accordance with the following policy documents:

- Compensation Policy;
- Resident Engagement Policy;
- Resident Fire Safety Engagement Policy; and
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

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