



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SCHEDULE 4**

### **COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS**

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation are required by our Management Agreement to have in place a policy detailing how we respond to complaints and clear procedures we will follow when investigating a complaint.

This document, our Statement of Policy and Procedures describes how we will respond to complaints we receive.

This statement includes a description of our Complaints Procedure. This is a formal procedure that sets out how our staff will respond to a complaint.

When our customers express dissatisfaction with any of the services we provide, we welcome and value the opportunity to address their concerns and aim to resolve their complaint with minimal formality. We recognise that effective resolution of complaints will help us to:

- Target resources better and improve service delivery.
- Maintain our credibility and image with customers.
- Improve customer satisfaction and confidence.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in all areas of service delivery.
- Provide opportunities for us to improve and help prevent problems.

In addition, Dovecotes TMO also want to know when our customers are happy with a service they receive. When compliments are received they are reported to the Management Committee at monthly board meetings.

This is a single document that shows both policy and procedural statements for clarity.

## **Policy & Procedure**

### **1. Complaint Definition**

Dovecotes TMO use the following definition of a complaint:

‘An expression of dissatisfaction, however made about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents’.

A request for service is not a complaint; complaints are about situations when the tenant making the complaint thinks that things have gone wrong, this will not have to be termed by the customer as a complaint but will be dealt with in line with the organisations Complaints Policy.

Complaints can be reported to Dovecotes TMO in person, in writing, email or via the organisation’s social media accounts and website. Dovecotes TMO requires complaints to be submitted using a written form to ensure complaints are recorded and reported clearly from a complainant’s point of view. However, reasonable adjustments will be provided for disabled people under the Equality Act 2010 and are detailed in our Reasonable Adjustment Policy.

### **Vexatious Complaints**

A vexatious complainant is a complainant who is pursuing a complaint which is entirely without merit and is made with the intention of causing inconvenience, harassment or expense to employees or committee members of the TMO. These complaints can either slow down the investigation of a complaint or be so time consuming to manage, that the behaviour interferes with proper consideration of the complaint.

Based on the circumstances and behaviour of the customer and their complaint, restrictive actions will be tailored accordingly. If a decision is taken to apply restricted access, we will write to the complainant to explain:

- Why the decision has been taken.
- What it means for his or her contacts with the organisation.
- How long any limits will last and what the complainant can do to have the decision reviewed.

### **2. STAGE ONE**

A complaint will initially be logged at point of contact and passed to a senior officer who will try and resolve the complaint in an informal way. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days. Then investigated and a response sent within

10\* working days from receipt of the complaint. These complaints may be resolved with a phone call or a visit and discussion with various parties who may be involved.

### **3. STAGE TWO**

Stage two will come into operation when a complaint cannot be resolved at Stage One. The Chief Officer will convene and chair a panel of representative, one of whom must be a tenant who will review the decision made at Stage One and either uphold the decision, or propose an alternative solution in writing to the complainant. The target for completion of this stage is 20\* working days.

\*The primary objective of this policy is to resolve complaints within agreed timescales. If required, an extension of 10 working days can be applied with the agreement of the complainant. Requests must be approved by the Chief Officer at Stage 1 and the Chair of the Board at Stage 2. All extensions must be evidenced and recorded on the complaint monitoring log.

### **4. Resolution of Complaint**

A lack of response from the complainant at any stage will be recorded as 'resolved' once the target deadline date is reached. Reasonable adjustment will be applied if the complaint cannot respond within the target deadline, the customer should notify the TMO of this and give their reasons.

Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation's Complaints Policy is designed to ensure that it meets its service obligations and tackles poor performance at the earliest possible stage. Dovecotes TMO will always endeavour to provide reasonable explanations and propose reasonable solutions.

### **5. Compliments**

Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation values not only complaints it receives from customers, but also any 'compliments' about service delivery. It is good to know when services are being provided well and when changes in service delivery have made a positive impact on tenants. Each compliment is recorded, acknowledged with the customer and reported to the management committee at monthly board meetings.

### **6. Promotions of the Service**

The complaints policy and procedure will be publicised within the office, at the start of the new tenancies, on the organisations website and a copy will be always available in the office or by post on request. The information will emphasise that the aim of the Complaints Policy is to:

- Rectify problems where Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation has failed to meet service standards.
- Explain policy decisions.
- Review service provisions based on an analysis of customer feedback.

## **7. Performance Monitoring and Targets**

The aim is to resolve 100% of complaints at each stage of the process. Staff should be focused on resolutions at every stage, but particularly at Stage One.

Complaints will be used to highlight service areas tenants are most dissatisfied with and aid in the prioritisation of service for investigation and improvement.

## **8. Wolverhampton City Council**

At any time the customer can take their complaint to the City of Wolverhampton Council either by submitting this in writing, or by telephoning 01902 551155 and asking for Corporate Complaints. The Council's Complaints Division will contact the TMO and inform them of the complaint and give the TMO the opportunity to resolve the matter. In this instance, a copy of the response would be sent to both our customer and Corporate Complaints.

## **9. Continuous Learning and Improvement**

Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation have a positive complaint handling culture and use complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve our relationship with members. We proactively use learning from complaints to revise policies and procedures, to train staff and contractors and to improve communication with our members.

At each stage of the procedure we will act with accountability, transparency and provide feedback to residents where we have failed and the actions taken to learn and improve. Learning and improvement from complaints will also be included in our Annual Report.

We are a tenant led organisation and value the importance of resident involvement. Committee Members are fully compliant in the organisation's complaints policy and procedure and included in stage two panel hearings as part of the dispute resolution process, where appropriate.

At closing stage, the complainant will be asked to complete an online survey to enable the TMO to gather feedback for future and continuous improvement.

## **10. Housing Ombudsman.**

At any point a complainant can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service via the contact details set out below:

**In writing to:** Housing Ombudsman, Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London, E14 9GE

**Via the organisations website:** [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint)

**Telephone:** 0300 111 3000

**Email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

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