

**Inspiring Housing  
Community Led Housing**

**Customer feedback and complaints  
Policy**



**INSPIRING  
HOUSING**

**6<sup>th</sup> June 2022  
V1**

**Inspiring Housing  
Customer feedback and Complaints  
Policy & Procedure  
Date first adopted: June 2022**

**Review dates:**

<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Amendments/Updates made</b>	<b>Reviewed &amp; accepted</b>	<b>Proposed next review</b>
June 2024			

**Policy Statement**

Inspiring Housing is committed to providing excellent customer service to everyone who is affected by its operation. We do not look at complaints as unwanted and we are firmly committed to a process of continuous improvement of which the complaints procedure is just one element. Recognising that sometimes things go wrong, or mistakes are made, this policy outlines the procedures to follow to make a complaint and the internal procedures we follow to manage the process.

This procedure will be available on our website and will form part of the induction process for staff and Directors. A copy will be sent to anyone making a complaint.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this complaints procedure are to ensure that:

- To be transparent and accountable to our customers
- To improve our responsiveness to customer needs and desires, through the use of customer feedback
- To ensure all complaints are actioned in the most expeditious way,
- To improve service delivery by acting on customer feedback
- Support staff to respond to complaints

**Definition of Customer**

For the purposes of this procedure, customers are defined as anyone who has any dealing with the organisation; excluding staff who are asked to raise issues either with their line manager or under the internal grievance procedure.

Directors are also excluded from this procedure: any specific issues should be raised with the Chair of the organisation.

**Misunderstandings**

Even if customers do not regard a particular concern as a 'complaint', we would still like to know about it as it may help us deal with something we would otherwise overlook.

These smaller things that go wrong or small misunderstandings can often be put right very quickly. We want to know about these; we want customers to get an acceptable solution very quickly but we also need to learn from the process.

In striving for excellent customer service, we realise that this is a high standard and in order to meet it, we need to be made aware of even the most minor failing.

In order to avoid customers feeling that a minor issue is not worth raising as a complaint, we will take steps to encourage comment and constructive criticism at every level.

Training will be provided to all staff in dealing with all reported issues and misunderstandings. This training will include an empowerment to immediately resolve any issue where our service level has not met our customer's expectations, if this is possible. members of staff will record all issues dealt with in this way.

The customer's name will not be included and the staff member will make an objective judgement on the cause of the problem and these will be analysed on a regular basis as part of our process of continuous improvement.

### **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is defined, for the purpose of this procedure, as a written record compiled by any customer of Inspiring Housing that is sent to the appropriate person to be registered and where the originator has received an acknowledgement.

To clarify, the definition "complaint" does not include a comment provided by individuals asking for a simple remedy to a minor problem.

### **Integrity**

During the process of dealing with a complaint we will be as open and transparent as possible. People raising complaints will be given full information about the progress of their complaint except in the cases mentioned below.

- If the complaint involves questions about the actions or competencies of individual members of staff or Director, other processes may subsume the complaints procedure and Inspiring Housing may not be able to provide the person raising the complaint with all the relevant information. (For instance, employment legislation may prevent publication of the results of disciplinary processes)
- The legal requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Whistleblowers) may restrict the information that can be provided to persons raising complaints. If either of these situations occurs a senior member of staff will provide an explanation without disclosing any restricted information.

To ensure confidentiality, information about the progress of a complaint will only be provided to the person making the complaint.

### **Complaints Process**

Customer can use a number of different ways to let us know they are unhappy.

These include:

- Using our website
- Speaking to a Director or member of staff
- Sending us an email
- Writing us a letter
- Using social media

Customers making formal complaints are asked to write or email an explanation of the issue that has caused them to be dissatisfied. A complaint should also contain an explanation of what the person making the complaint requires to be done to resolve the issue.

Complaints should be sent to: [bernadette.elder@inspiringcommunitiestogether.co.uk](mailto:bernadette.elder@inspiringcommunitiestogether.co.uk) in order to register them within the procedure. The senior member of staff dealing with the complaint will send an acknowledgement within 2 working days giving a complaint

registration number. Including this number with any further correspondence will assist Inspiring Housing.

The senior member of staff will refer each complaint to an appropriate Board member for the first review, unless such a person is specifically mentioned in the complaint, in which case it will be referred to another Director of the organisation.

- All correspondence about complaints will be treated as confidential.
- When the first reviewer has considered the detail of the complaint, the person raising the complaint will receive a written response detailing any proposed remedial action. This will be done within 14 days of the receipt of the original complaint.
- If this is not possible, the senior member of staff will explain this in writing within the 14 days. The person raising the complaint will also be told in this response that they can request a second review.
- If a second review is requested, the matter will be referred to another Director of Inspiring Housing.
- Following the second review, the person raising the complaint will be provided with a written response detailing any changes to the previously proposed remedial action. In the majority of cases the second review will be the final position of Inspiring Housing.

This final response will also indicate if, and how, the complaint can be progressed beyond this second stage. Should a complainant still be unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they have the option of referring the matter to either an independent tenant panel, or the Housing Ombudsman. Customers should be aware that neither of these options are managed by Inspiring Housing and we cannot accept any responsibility for their willingness to consider a complaint, not for any judgements made by either of these bodies.

#### **Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)**

The Housing Ombudsman Service is a legal body established to impartially consider complaints and disputes between tenants / leaseholders and their landlords. They will consider all of the evidence from both sides of any dispute and can make recommendations to both parties on how to rectify both the matter at hand and to ensure that such a situation does not occur again.

Any customer who is unhappy with the outcome of their complaint may refer their case to the Ombudsman for a judgement, provided that a minimum of 8 weeks have expired since Inspiring Housing complaints process has ended (i.e. 8 weeks after a customer has received their written review of the complaint).

Should a customer wish to take a complaint to the Ombudsman sooner than the 8 week period, they can do with the support of a designated person recognised by the Ombudsman:

- A member of the House of Commons (i.e. an MP)
- A member of the Local Authority for the area in which the property is located (i.e. a Local Councillor)
- A designated Tenant Panel (as outlined above)

Making a referral to the Ombudsman is free and further details can be found at:  
<http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

## **Results of Complaints**

The Board of Directors will receive a report at least once a year showing how many complaints have been received, the general nature of the problem and a list of remedial actions that have been taken. The Board may, at their discretion, require more frequent reports.

A summary statement will be included on Inspiring Housing website and, at the discretion of the Board, published in our annual report.

## **Continuous Improvement**

Inspiring Housing strives to be a learning organisation and will further develop quality improvement procedures, which will include information received from this process. Inspiring Housing would appreciate feedback from complainants about their experience of Inspiring Housing complaints procedure and may use this to improve the way complaints are managed in the future.

### **Service standards and performance measures**

#### **Formal Complaints**

- The number of complaints received by service area and complaint theme
- The percentage of complaints received successfully resolved after an investigation

#### **Investigating complaints**

- All formal complaints to have a written acknowledgement sent to the complainant within 2 working days of our receipt of the initial complaint
- A written response detailing the findings of the complaint investigation to be sent out to the complainant within 14 working days of our receipt of the initial complaint
- The percentage and number of complaints upheld or partially upheld

#### **Reviewing Investigations**

- All requests for a complaint review to have a written acknowledgement sent to the complainant within the 2 working days of our receipt of the request for a review
- A written response detailing the findings of the complaint review to be sent out to the complainant within 14 working days of our receipt of the request for a review
- The percentage and number of complaints upheld or partially upheld