

## Winchester Housing Trust

### Complaints Policy & Procedure

#### Introduction

As a Trust we are committed to providing high quality customer service. This policy applies to anyone who has been directly or adversely affected by us, our homes or services. This could be tenants, home owners, external agencies and/or the general public. We welcome the opinions of anyone who has had an experience with Winchester Housing Trust and take seriously any form of complaint. We value feedback from our customers which helps improve the quality of service we deliver by bringing to our attention areas which require improvement.

#### Definition

In this case a complaint would be receiving negative feedback on the way a service has been delivered or aspects of a service that is affecting others in a negative way. A complaint usually (but not always) carries an expectation to respond.

#### Objectives

This policy aims to achieve the following:

- Ensure anyone who uses our service knows how to give feedback (including complaints) of any nature should they feel their experience of WHT has failed or exceeded their expectations.
- Ensure the system to feedback information is easy and accessible and has adequate response times.
- Ensure all feedback is used productively to improve the quality of WHT's delivery of service.
- Ensure customers are satisfied with the response received from WHT following their feedback.

#### Complaints Procedure

Complaints should be made in writing via the generic email address – [enquiries@winchesterhousingtrust.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@winchesterhousingtrust.co.uk). Alternatively they can be put in writing through the post or hand delivered to the office address:

Southgate Chambers, 37-39 Southgate Street, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8SR

Complaints should clearly state the nature of the complaint and include any dates or times of any incidents which relate to the complaint, including any photographs if appropriate. All complaints should then be accurately logged and monitored within our customer database (Arthur).

For those unable to access email, a complaint can be made over the telephone by calling the office on 01962 790 588, however it is important to truly capture every detail of a complaint and note this with mutual agreement and therefore in writing is preferred to ensure accuracy and good record keeping.

Staff and all associates of the Trust must use the following process in the event that a complaint is made:

#### Stage 1

1. All relevant details to be taken and recorded within (Arthur), including contact details for the complainant along with a detailed description of the nature of the complaint.
2. All complaints to be acknowledged within 2 working days. This may be in the form of an email, phone call or letter.
3. Staff are required to resolve complaints as promptly as possible and where it is appropriate to apply early resolution, staff are expected to do so. This is done by:
  - Speaking directly to the complainant and doing everything within their ability to resolve the problem to the satisfaction of the customer.
4. If staff are unable to resolve an issue in this way, stage 2 of the complaints procedure will apply.
5. Where a complaint is resolved quickly via the early resolution stage, WHT will continue to hold and where necessary, monitor this information so that this issue does not continue to present itself.

#### Stage 2

1. Where it has not been possible to apply a quick resolution, staff will gather all necessary information and investigate the nature of the complaint and communicate back to the customer within 5 working days, advising them on what has been explored and what outcome has been achieved.
2. Where a solution has not been found or the complaint requires further activity, this will be explained to the complainant ensuring they are informed of progress (still within 5 days).
3. The staff member dealing with the complaint will be responsible for following up any actions that have been agreed with the complainant.
4. Where the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may request for their complaint to be reviewed. This request can be in any form and should include details of their expectations and any suggestions.
5. The review must be acknowledged within 5 working days of the date that the review was requested.
6. Where staff handling the complaint feel a review is ineffective or unproductive, this will be discussed with senior management who will advise of next steps.
7. Where a complainant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, despite first and second stages, their complaint will be escalated to senior management.
8. Where senior management feel it is necessary, or where the complainant still feels the issue has not been addressed satisfactorily, it may be that the Board are called upon to give a final decision of the outcome.

Irrespective of the stage in which the complaint is escalated, all dealings and forms of communication relating, must be accurately and efficiently recorded on the Arthur database.



For further assistance or advice you may want to contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> or by calling 0800 144 8848

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