**How we deal with complaints, comments and compliments**

Hexagon Housing Association welcomes feedback on our services, whether it is a comment, compliment or a complaint.

# Comments and compliments

Comments about the service are where you want us to record your experience but where you are not expecting us to carry out follow up action on your particular case. Our Customer Services staff will record these and pass them onto the relevant manager. Compliments are where you want to praise the staff who delivered a service particularly well; these will be recorded by Customer Services and passed on to the relevant manager.

**Complaints**

We aim to provide a good service to all our residents and applicants for our housing and others who come into contact with our services. We believe our staff and contractors do a good job, but realise there will be times when things go wrong. If you believe we have done something wrong, you can make a **complaint** which we will investigate and try to settle as quickly as possible.

**Who can complain?**

* Tenants or leaseholders of the Association
* Tenants or residents of our supported housing, managed directly by the Association
* Residents of our care homes
* Friends or relatives of tenants, leaseholders, residents, or clients (with the resident’s written consent).
* Applicants for housing
* Any individual or organisation who has used the services of the Association

Neighbours and other members of the public will not be able to use the complaints procedure, but we will respond to correspondence and other contacts as appropriate for a socially responsible organisation.

# Using the Complaints Procedure

Our Complaints Procedure deals with the following matters:

* Something we have done wrongly or badly which has resulted in you getting less than the promised standard of service, e.g.

* + Failure to follow our procedures

* + Being given inaccurate information

* + Lengthy delays in dealing with matters
  + Unclear or incomplete replies to enquiries

* + Complaint about the type of property you were offered

* + Complaint about the way we have graded your application for a transfer or rehousing

* Doing something we should not have done, e.g.

* + Discriminating against you

* + Being rude

* + Breaking appointments without telling you

* Failure to do something we should have done, e.g.

* + Taking too long to answer your letters/queries

* + Failing to have procedures for dealing with your query.

Our Complaints Procedure cannot deal with:

* Anything which happened to you over a year ago and which you did not report as a problem at the time.

* A policy decision which has been properly arrived at

* Anything already considered by a Court or the Independent Housing Ombudsman.

# Anti-social behaviour

We handle complaints about Anti-Social Behaviour in a different way. We have a separate Anti-social behaviour policy. Please report complaints about Anti-social behaviour to Customer Services.

# Making your Complaint

You can make your complaint to any Hexagon staff member. You may telephone, email, write to us, speak to us in person or use the form on our website to report your complaint and all such contacts are logged and monitored. If you telephone, explain your complaint to Customer Services who will log it on our IT system and refer it to the correct team. You need to explain exactly what your complaint is so we can start to look into it. We have a form for this purpose, attached to this leaflet, but you can also write a letter, email us, or phone us, but however you do it, it helps us investigate the complaint if you include the details we ask for on the form.

However you tell us about your complaint, we will try to sort it out at the first attempt. If we cannot sort out the matter straight away, we will acknowledge your complaint and tell you who is dealing with it within 3 working days of receiving it. We aim to investigate the complaint and provide a full response within 15 working days.

**Stages of complaints procedure**

Our procedure has a number of stages and if you are not satisfied with our resolution the first time, you can take it to the next stage. All complaints are logged on our IT system so we can see who is dealing with it and the progress of your complaint.

**Initial stage** Our front-line staff (such as Customer Services advisors, housing officers, and surveyors) will try to resolve your complaint quickly and informally. We log and monitor all complaints and will give you a reference number on request so that you can be sure we have a record of your complaint. If you do send us a written complaint, we will send a written response. All complaints will initially be dealt with at this stage, unless they are complaints about the behaviour of our staff when they will be referred to a manager.

**Stage 1** If the response you receive from our front-line staff does not resolve the problem, you can escalate your complaint to the next stage where a manager investigates it.

Normally, the Manager of the service about which you are complaining will deal with your complaint. It may be necessary to ask you to supply further information on the telephone or in an interview at our office or in your home.

If your complaint is about the behaviour of an individual, we will ensure that this person is not involved in any investigation of or judgement on your complaint.

**Stage 2** If you feel the result is unsatisfactory, you will be able to ask for a more senior manager to the staff member who dealt with the complaint at Stage 1 to try to resolve the matter. We would normally expect you to do this within 30 days of receiving a Stage 1 response. You should tell us why you are not satisfied. You should receive a written response within 15 working days.

**Stage 3** If this still does not solve the problem, up to 30 days from the Stage 2 response, you can refer the complaint to a review panel. If you want to do this, tell the Director/manager responding at Stage 2 that you want to refer the matter to the review panel.

**Stage 3 review**

This is not another investigation. It is a review of how your complaint was dealt with at Stage 2. The review panel comprises two Board Members, one of whom will be a Hexagon tenant, and a Director. None of the panel will have been involved in the complaint. The review panels meet in the evenings at set dates at least once a month. You may wish to come to the meeting, but you do not have to. We will pay reasonable travel and child-care expenses for you to attend the meeting. You will be notified at the time of referring your complaint to Stage 3 when the meeting date is. You may have to wait for several weeks if there is already a complaint to be heard on the next available pre-set date.

At the meeting, you will be invited to state your case and you may bring a friend with you, but not a legal representative. You will be able to ask questions of the manager (who will also be present) and you should expect to be asked questions by the panel members and by the manager.

The decision of the review panel hearing the complaint will be reported to you within 10 working days.

**Complaints from residents of co-operatives and Supported Housing managing agents**

If you live in a property managed by an agency such as a co-operative rather than Hexagon directly, you should first contact the agency about your complaint so they have the chance to investigate and if necessary put things right first. (If you are not sure who manages your property, please ask us). We will investigate complaints about the performance of our managing agents.

# Complaints from groups of residents

If a group of Hexagon residents wants to complain about the same issue, you can organise a petition and we will consider your complaint in a very similar way to that used for individual complaints.

# How we learn from your complaints to help us improve our services

Hexagon continuously analyses the reasons for complaints, comments and compliments. We identify lessons we can learn from positive feedback and from individual complaints or a number of complaints and as a result make changes to the way we deliver our services.

## Monitoring and reporting on complaints

We monitor all complaints from the initial stage onwards in the same way and report in the Annual Residents’ Report how many complaints we have received in different areas of the service, how many were responded to within our target time and what the outcomes were. Complaints performance is also discussed every three months by our Residents’ Performance Review Group.

# Satisfaction with our complaints service

We carry out short satisfaction surveys of the way we have handled complaints soon after the response has gone out. We value your comments on the service and use these to try to improve the service in future.

# Variations to the procedure

Hexagon reserves the right to omit stages in the procedure or refer a case for mediation or arbitration if we believe it will resolve the problem more efficiently. We may also refer back to earlier stages new issues raised by a complainant which we have not had the opportunity to properly investigate. We also reserve the right to vary the procedure in order to be able to manage complaints from serial or vexatious complainants. Hexagon also reserves the right to seek advice from an external complaint resolution expert.

# Referral of your complaint to a local “Designated person”

Since 1 April 2013, you can ask an independent “designated person” in your local area to help resolve your complaint. These are local councillors and Members of Parliament. You can ask them for help at any stage. We can supply details of how to contact them. If a designated person contacts us about your complaint, we will work with them to try to resolve your complaint. The designated person may refer your complaint to the Ombudsman (see next section) but they can only do this, if you have exhausted our internal procedure.

# Ombudsman Service

If we have not resolved your complaint, you may take the case to the Housing Ombudsman Service after 8 weeks has elapsed, (but within 6 months) after the end of our internal procedure, This service is completely independent of the Association and is free to tenants.

(Alternatively, you may want to approach a designated person for help to try to resolve the complaint and you can do this straight away - see also previous section.) The address of the Ombudsman is: ***Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN. Telephone No: 020*** ***7421 3800, Fax No: 020 7831 1942, Locall: 0845 7125 973, Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk.*** You should be aware that the Ombudsman may decide to refer your case to a designated person to see if they can resolve it locally. They may also decline to investigate it if they judge any failure in service does not have a serious adverse effect on the complainant.

# Inspection Officers for Registered Care Homes

Residents of these homes can also complain to the Care Quality Commission. These complaints can be made at any time; it is not necessary to use all or any of the stages of Hexagon’s complaint procedure. Alternatively, residents can complain to their Care Manager in Social Services.

**Please do use our feedback mechanisms. Feedback really helps us improve the service.**

**COMPLAINTS FORM**

Please fill in all the sections of the form in as much detail as possible. Our Customer Services staff or other members of staff can help you complete the form. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary and enclose any relevant documents, which you think would help the investigation. Please return this form in an envelope marked

“**COMPLAINT”** to:

Customer Services

Hexagon Housing Association

130-136 Sydenham Road

London SE26 5JY

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**Your name**

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**Your address**

**Telephone: Home**  **Mobile**

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**Email**

**What is your complaint about? Please provide the details here.**

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**If this is not the first time you have reported the problem to Hexagon, who did you report it to (give name if possible)?**

**How would you like the matter resolved?**

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|  | **Date** |  |

**Please sign here**

To ensure everyone gets a fair response, we ask you the following:

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* Are you: Male Female

* Age of Complainant:

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Under 24 years

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25-34 years

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35-44 years

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45-54 years

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55-59 years

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60+

* Ethnic origin of complainant - tick one box

White:

British

Irish

Other

Mixed:

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Other

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Asian or Asian British:

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Other

Black or Black British:

Caribbean

African

Other

Chinese:

Gypsy/Romany/Irish:

Other ethnic group:

 Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes No