

## **- YMCA Doncaster - Complaints and Compliments Policy**

### **1. Definition**

1.1 The Housing Ombudsman defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by the organisation, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents'.

1.2 For YMCA Doncaster this policy primarily covers dissatisfaction from residents, with section 10 covering complaints from non-residents and section 11 referring to compliments.

1.3 When considering feedback from a resident client, we will consider whether it is either a service request or a complaint.

1.4 A service request is defined as a request from a resident that the organisation provides a service or fixes a problem when reported. This could be a request for a new repair to be completed or a report that the repair did not go ahead as planned for example, a missed appointment.

1.5 Service requests do not form part of the complaints procedure. However, a complaint must be raised when the resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. We will not stop our efforts to address the service request if a resident raises a complaint.

### **2. Aim of Policy**

2.1 The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure that residents have open and fair access to the complaints process.
- Manage complaints effectively and efficiently.
- Operate a prompt, fair, compliant escalation and review process.

### **3. Equality Impact Assessment**

3.1 We are committed to treating everyone fairly, recognising the protected characteristics set out in equalities legislation. We will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities and will take positive action where appropriate.

3.2 We make appropriate arrangements where necessary to ensure that clients with distinct communication needs are not unreasonably and disproportionately affected. This could involve providing communications in alternative languages or formats or providing interpretative or transcription assistance where appropriate.

3.3 We will ensure that anyone living with us is supported to make a complaint and ensure that they are not subject to any reprisal or detriment for making a complaint.

3.4 A resident does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction, YMCA staff will give them the choice to make a complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will also be handled in line with the Complaints Policy (where consent is provided).

## **4. Making a Complaint**

4.1 A complaint can be made within 12 months of the occurrence which is being complained about. Complaints can be made in the following ways:

- Current resident clients can speak to a member of staff on duty in the Duty Office or click the link on the Residents' Hub.
- Completing the complaint form on YMCA Doncaster's website.
- Writing to  
Complaints, YMCA Doncaster, 31 Wood Street, Doncaster, DN1 3LH
- Phoning 01302 342148 and explaining that you wish to speak to somebody regarding a complaint – your message will be passed onto the relevant staff member.

4.2 Where the complaint concerns a safeguarding issue, then YMCA Doncaster's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure will apply.

## **5. Timescales - Stage One**

5.1 We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

5.2 We will then speak to the complainant to confirm the understanding of the complaint and look at what they would like us to do to put things right.

5.3 We will then begin the process of investigating the complaint. Investigating may include talking to the person who has been complained about, talking to staff, talking to others and reviewing CCTV.

5.4 We will write to the complainant setting out our findings and if necessary, offering resolution.

5.5 We will respond with a decision within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. Our response will clearly set out the decision made (whether it has been upheld/partially upheld/not upheld) and the reasons why, details of any remedies to put things right and any outstanding actions. It will also provide details of how to escalate the matter if unsatisfied.

5.6 If this time limit cannot be met, we will write to the complainant within 10 working days of acknowledgement, explaining the reason for the delay, providing a revised date (which should not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason) and giving details of the Housing Ombudsman (where relevant).

## **6. Appeal against a decision - Stage Two**

6.1 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, or feels that the procedure has not been followed, then they must contact us to appeal this decision.

6.2 We will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 5 working days.

6.3 We will make reasonable efforts to understand why the complainant remains unhappy as part of our appeal process.

6.4 A review of the decision will be taken by a person who is not involved in the original decision. Where the complaint is about the Chief Executive, then this appeal stage will be coordinated by the Chair of the Board.

6.5 We will respond with a decision within 20 working days of the appeal being acknowledged, clearly noting reasons for our decision (whether it has been upheld/partially upheld/not upheld).

6.6 If this time limit cannot be met, we will write to the complainant within 20 working days of acknowledgement, explaining the reason for the delay and providing a revised date (which should not exceed a further 20 days without good reason) and providing details for the Housing Ombudsman (where relevant).

6.7 Where the complaint relates to landlord services then complaints may be passed directly to the Housing Ombudsman if the complaint has passed through all the internal procedures for considering complaints against the landlord. Residents can, however, contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point during the complaint process. The Housing Ombudsman cannot investigate the complaint whilst it is going through the internal procedure but they may help facilitate a resolution. They can be contacted on 0300 111 3000 or [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk).

6.8 For further information, please visit [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk). Please note that this is specifically for housing complaints.

## 7. Exclusions

7.1 The following type of complaints cannot be pursued through the complaints process where the issue:

- Has already been raised through our complaints process and matters have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- Is, has or should be handled through legal action and where legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Is an internal complaint raised by a member of staff or volunteer (which should instead be treated in line with the grievance or whistleblowing policies).
- Is raised anonymously or without any means of speaking to the complainant in order to substantiate their complaint.
- Occurred over twelve months ago. Discretion will apply here e.g. individual personal circumstances e.g. bereavement/illness, vulnerabilities; where a resident has not been aware of the issue and could not be expected to bring the complaint forward sooner.

7.2 Where a complaint cannot be pursued through our complaints process, we will provide the complainant with an explanation setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take our decision to the Housing Ombudsman if their complaint is in relation to our landlord duties.

## 8. Reporting and Monitoring

8.1 We will use complaints as an opportunity to learn and implement remedies to prevent future reoccurrences where appropriate. When closed, complaints will be analysed to:

- Assess whether the service standards set out in this policy have been met.
- Assess the quality of response to complaints.
- Assess that appropriate action has been taken within reasonable response times.
- Assess whether the policy has been applied fairly and consistently.
- Identify any lessons to be learnt and service improvements made.
- Decide on any necessary communication to staff and customers.
- Identify any required amendments to procedures.
- Report on the number of complaints that have been handled via our unacceptable behaviour processes or ones that are repetitive.

8.2 We will routinely monitor our performance in implementing this policy and report outcomes to the Board, the Member Responsible for Complaints and the Chief Executive.

8.3 The Board will consider the impact of very serious complaints on the risk register.

8.4 We will complete annual tenant satisfaction surveys that will enable resident clients to provide feedback on complaints handling to ensure that they feel able to complain and are confident that their complaint will be dealt with in a positive manner. Clients who express dissatisfaction will be provided with details of our complaints process and the details of the Housing Ombudsman if their complaint is in relation to our landlord duties.

## **9. Reporting Responsibilities**

9.1 The Board of Governors will appoint a Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC).

9.2 The MRC's responsibilities are to

- (a) Receive an anonymised quarterly complaints summary of the outcome, reason and remedy for each complaint in the period.
- (b) Discuss any matters of concern arising from patterns of complaints with the Deputy Chief Executive.
- (c) Inform the Board of Governors' strategic discussions where relevant to complaints reporting compliance.
- (d) Sign the annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report provided by the Deputy Chief Executive
- (e) Pass any concerns about the Deputy Chief Executive's performance or conduct to the Chief Executive immediately.

9.3 The Deputy Chief Executive will oversee the handling of complaints and provide monthly monitoring information to the Chief Executive.

9.4 The Deputy Chief Executive will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report to the Board of Governors. This will sit alongside reporting on Tenant Satisfaction Measures. These documents, together with the Board's response, will be published on our website.

9.5 The Deputy Chief Executive will hold the Complaints Officer designation for the purposes of the Housing Ombudsman Code.

9.6 The Chief Executive is responsible for updating the risk register in line with specific complaints and reporting complaints to Regulators as required.

9.7 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Complaints Policy, including information about the Ombudsman and the Complaint Handling Code is publicised on the YMCA Doncaster's website.

## **10. Non-Resident Complaints**

10.1 Complaints raised by non-residents including, activity participants, parents, or members of the public will follow a separate process; as noted below.

10.2 These complaints can be made in the following way:

- Completing the complaint form on YMCA Doncaster's website.
- Writing to - Complaints, YMCA Doncaster, 31 Wood Street, Doncaster, DN1 3LH

- Phoning 01302 342148 and explaining that you wish to speak to somebody regarding a non-resident complaint – your message will be passed onto the relevant staff member.

10.3 The Deputy Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing for all non-resident complaints. If the Deputy Chief Executive is away for more than 2 working days this responsibility will be designated to the Chief Executive.

10.4 We will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.

10.5 We will then speak to the complainant to confirm the understanding of the complaint and look at what they would like us to do to put things right.

10.6 The Deputy Chief Executive (or Chief Executive in their absence) will assign the investigation to an appropriate member of staff. Investigating may include talking to the person who has been complained about, talking to staff, talking to others and reviewing evidence including CCTV.

10.7 The Deputy Chief Executive will respond with a decision within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. Our response will clearly set out the decision made (whether it has been upheld/partially upheld/not upheld) and the reasons why, details of any remedies to put things right and any outstanding actions. It will also provide details of how to escalate the matter if unsatisfied.

10.8 If the complainant is still not satisfied with the Deputy Chief Executive's written reply, they need to put the details in writing to the Chief Executive (or Chair of the Board where the Chief Executive was responsible for the initial investigation). The Chief Executive, or Chair, will respond to the complainant in writing within 20 working days.

## **11 Compliments**

11.1 Compliments are helpful to us in understanding the things that YMCA Doncaster and particular members of staff are doing well.

11.2 Compliments can be made in the following way:

- Completing the compliment form on YMCA Doncaster's website.
- Writing to  
Compliments, YMCA Doncaster, 31 Wood Street, Doncaster, DN1 3LH
- Phoning 01302 342148 and leaving a message for the Deputy Chief Executive.
- Resident Clients can use the leave a compliment through the Residents' Hub.

11.3 The Deputy Chief Executive is responsible for logging all compliments and ensuring that feedback is given to the relevant person or department.

11.4 All compliments received during the monthly form part of the Deputy Chief Executive's monthly report to the Chief Executive.

## **Approval and Revision**

This policy was approved by the Board of Governors on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024  
The policy will be reviewed after one year.