1. Complaints about CWA by Residents

**Policy:**

* **To ensure that complaints from residents, their families or advocates are dealt with in an easy, timely and fair manner.**
* **To provide residents with an accessible way to have their complaint or appeal heard.**
* **To learn from complaints and use them to improve services.**
* **To keep the Board informed of the number and type of complaints via the quarterly Key Performance Indicators.**
* **To comply with our duties as a member of the Housing Ombudsman service.**

**To follow the Housing Ombudsman’s principles of good dispute resolution: to be fair, to put things right and to learn from the outcomes.**

**Scope:**

All residents have the right to complain about any aspect of the service provided to them by:

* CWA staff
* CWA Trustees
* CWA volunteers, and
* Contractorsworking on behalf of CWA. It does not cover contractors or agencies directly employed or arranged by a resident.

This policy does not coverdisputes between individual residents, although the CWA may intervene in the interests of good management.

**General**

CWA makes decisions based on set guidelines that aim to be fair to everyone. These guidelines are our policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are designed to meet standards of service for our housing and to comply with relevant laws and the requirements of Homes England. They are reviewed; amended and approved by the CEO or Board. Residents may not always agree with a decision made. If this is the case, it is important that he or she, or their family or advocate on their behalf, is able to ask us to review our decision.

CWA recognises that sometimes mistakes can be made or that we may act in a way that is unfair; sometimes we may need to change the policies and procedures that guide how we make decisions in the light of feedback from complaints.

Generally complaints or disagreements are best resolved in an informal way, dealing with them on a face to face basis and before they escalate into something more serious.

**Unresolved Complaints**

If a resident is not satisfied with the final decision given by the CWA then they can contact a designated person to help find a solution. A designated person is a member of parliament (MP) or a local councillor. The designated person can help resolve the complaint in one of two ways:

* they can try and resolve the complaint themselves; or
* they can refer the complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman.

The resident may contact the Housing Ombudsman directly but by law it must be at least eight weeks after the CWA has given its final response to the complaint.

**Housing Ombudsman**

As a registered provider of social housing the CWA is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service. Residents can refer their complaint to the Ombudsman if they do not believe that CWA has dealt with their complaint satisfactorily. The CWA can also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service in finding a resolution.

As a member CWA must:

1. Inform complainants of their right to bring complaints to the Ombudsman under the Scheme.
2. Publish the CWA complaints procedure and its membership of the Scheme, and make information about them available to those entitled to complain to the Ombudsman.

**Reporting**

The number and nature of each complaint will be reported to each Board meeting as a Key Performance Indicator.

**Record Keeping**

All complaints will be kept in accordance with CWA’s Data Protection, Security and Retention policy.

**Procedure:**

\* The template for the complaints register is held as an appendix in the policies and procedures manual.

\*\*The template for the complaints form is held as an appendix in the policies and procedures manual.

\*\*\*The CWA’s final response to a complaint should be in writing and should state that it is the final response. It should include details such as those below advising residents on what to do if they remain dissatisfied with the response to their complaint.

Example wording:

If you *remain dissatisfied with this response you can ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to investigate how we dealt with the matter. To contact the Housing Ombudsman Service, you can ask one of the following to refer your complaint:*

* *A member of Parliament (MP)*
* *A local Councillor*

*You can also contact the Housing Ombudsman directly but please note that the Ombudsman will not be able to investigate your complaint until eight weeks from the date of this letter.*

*The contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service are:*

* *Online complaint form:* [*www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/*](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/)
* *Phone: 0300 111 3000*
* *Email:* [*info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk*](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
* *Address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ*

**Notes:**

* All complaints made by residents should be initially dealt with by the Scheme Manager.
* The resident may ask for a friend; advocate or family member to accompany them when meeting with either the CEO or the Trustees' Panel
* The panel would normally consist of three Trustees with the CEO in attendance
* At each stage contemporaneous notes will be made and placed on the resident or property file.
* At each stage a written reply will be given to the resident, with a copy on file.
* If the complaint is about a specific member of staff or Trustee the person in question should not be involved in the resolution process. For example, if the complaint is about the CEO then an interview should be arranged with the Chair of Trustees, or if the complaint is about the Scheme Manager it should be dealt with by the CEO.

If the complaint is about a Trustee, the complaint will be initially processed by the CEO who will refer it to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board. If the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved a Panel will be convened as per the flow chart above.

**This Procedure was approved by the Board 28th March 2013 and reviewed August 2023 by CT, Chair and Vice Chair**