

Complaints Policy

May 2019



Introduction

Reside Housing Association ('Reside') aims to provide a high quality service to all its tenants and stakeholders. Reside will always aim to resolve every complaint straight away and before it reaches the formal stage. However, if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your complaint informally, we will follow the following procedure. Reside treats all complaints seriously. Where we find that our service has fallen short of our high standards, we aim to learn from this and constantly improve the quality of the service.

Definition of a complaint

A complaint is when someone tells Reside they aren't happy with the service they have received. Reside will consider complaints from anyone, be they a tenant, possible tenant, other stakeholder or a member of the public.

This policy deals mainly with complaints made about the service provided by Reside, or Reside as an organisation. If you wish to make a complaint about another person, whether they are tenants, neighbours or members of the public, please do let us know, and we will deal with this using our anti-social behaviour policy.

Complaints may be made by support-staff or advocates who support the tenant concerned or directly by tenants themselves. In instances where the tenant is supported to make a complaint Reside reserves the right to satisfy itself that the complaint accurately represents the views of the tenant.

Reside's approach to complaints

Reside's view is that:

- Everyone has a right to complain about the service they receive or inappropriate actions by Reside
- people should not feel put off from making a complaint
- people should be helped to complain if necessary

- complaints are a positive opportunity to improve our services

The aim of the Complaints Procedure is to deal with all complaints quickly and simply. There are three stages, starting with a complaint to the individual responsible for the service and concluding with a complaint to the CEO & Board Members. Clear timescales are built into the process and provision made for the tenant to be kept informed of the progress of their complaint. At each stage, if Reside has failed every effort must be made to remedy the problem.

Reside aims to provide a high standard of service to satisfy tenants and welcomes complaints as this enables improvement to services. Therefore, Reside's staff will not discourage tenants from making a complaint.

Most complainants want Reside to recognise where it has failed and to resolve the. If Reside has failed to provide an acceptable service, Reside will admit so and apologise.

Reside's aim is that this procedure should:

- be easily available
- be simple to understand and to use
- ensure a full and fair investigation
- respect people's need for privacy and confidentiality
- allow for the complaint to be dealt with as well as possible
- provide a good response
- provide information to managers so that services can be made better

Helping people to make a complaint

Reside tenants should know about this complaints policy when they sign their tenancy agreement. Tenants should also know about the complaints section in the Tenant Handbook.

In all cases, tenants have the right to be supported and helped to make a complaint, and to have someone go to any meetings about the complaint. This could be a support worker, an advocate, a family member or a friend.

Complaints can be made by:

- telephone
- letter

- email
- in person

Reside's complaints process

The aim of the complaints procedure is to deal with all complaints quickly and simply.

There are three stages, starting with a complaint to the person responsible for the service, and ending with a complaint to Board members. Clear timescales are included in the process and the person complaining should be told about their complaint along the way. Occasionally investigation processes may take longer than the allotted timescales, if this is the case then the person complaining will be kept updated at 10 day intervals, but efforts will be made to resolve all complaints as quickly as possible.

Stage One:

Unless the complaint is about the particular member of staff, at first, the complaint should be sent to the manager in charge of the service. For example, repair and maintenance complaints should be sent to the Head of Maintenance, tenancy complaints should be sent to the Head of Tenant Support. If the complaint is about the manager, the complaint goes straight to Stage Two.

Details of the complaint can be taken by any member of staff and given to the manager in charge. If the manager is off work for more than two days, the complaint should be given to their line manager.

All complaints will be acknowledged in writing within five working days and this procedure should also be sent. An investigation will then be done, and a full reply will be sent within ten working days of the acknowledgement letter.

Where possible, the manager should phone the person complaining and then write to them as well. The letter should say what the outcome of the investigation is and what decision has been made. The letter will also explain what the next stage of the complaints process is, in case the person complaining isn't satisfied with the result of Stage One.

Copies of the original complaint (letter, email or file note) plus anything else will be kept in the tenant's individual folder, and the information put onto the complaints tracker.

Stage Two:

If the person complaining isn't satisfied with the Stage One investigation and decision, they can raise the complaint to a Stage Two complaint either by phone, letter, email or in person within 20 working days. This will then be given to the line manager of the manager who dealt with the Stage One complaint. A letter will be sent within 5 working days to say we have received the Stage Two complaint. A further investigation will be done and, if necessary, a meeting might be held with the person complaining. A letter will then be sent within ten working days of the acknowledgement letter. The letter should explain the decision and tell the person complaining what the next stage is in case they're not happy with the Stage Two outcome. All letters, emails and file notes will be kept in the tenant's individual folder and details updated on the complaints tracker.

Stage Three:

If the person complaining isn't happy with the Stage Two investigation and decision, they should make a further complaint to the Chief Executive within 20 working days. At this stage, the person will be offered a personal meeting with the CEO or their representative. If a personal hearing has been requested this should ideally be arranged no later than 4 weeks of the receipt of the Stage Three complaint. As a result of the Stage Three investigation, including any personal hearing, the CEO will repair a report and arrange a complaints panel. The Complaints Panel will consist of the Chief Executive and two Board members.

If the person complaining hasn't asked for a personal hearing, the Complaints Panel will take into account anything the person complaining has said.

The report will be sent to the Complaints Panel within two weeks of hearing the Stage Three complaint. A copy of the report should also be sent to the person complaining who will be invited to make any representations regarding its accuracy to the panel. The Complaints Panel may seek any necessary clarification from the person complaining or staff.

The Complaints Panel will then make a decision. The Panel will then give their decision to the person complaining within 20 working days of the report being sent to the Panel and the person complaining.

The decision will be given in writing and will:

- stand alone, without making reference to previous correspondence, unless it is attached to the letter
- include an apology or expression of regret that a complaint was needed to raise an issue, regardless of whether the complaint is justified and upheld
- include a summary of the complaint and of Reside's investigations
- say whether Reside has been at fault in any way
- say any offer made to settle the complaint and how long the offer will be available
- make it clear that this is a final response
- tell the complainant they now have the right to complain to the Ombudsman within 12 months if they're still not happy

Complaints not resolved by Reside's process

If someone has gone through Reside's whole complaints process and are still not happy with the decision and response, they should contact the Housing Ombudsman Service, an independent body who governs Reside's complaints procedures. The Ombudsman will want to make sure that the complainant has already followed Reside's complaints procedure before dealing with the complaint. For more information, please refer to:

www.cih.org/complaints

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Monitoring and reporting

All complaints are recorded on the Complaints Tracker. All tenants are invited to give feedback on the way Reside handle complaints through the yearly Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Reside will monitor complaints on an ongoing basis.

Complaints Statistics are reported to the Board, the Chief Executive reviews all complaints received each quarter and seeks to identify any common features and reports to the Board on this and on the steps proposed to address any problems.