



## Complaints Procedure

Approved by Board on 9 December 2020

*In this procedure you are our tenant if you pay your rent to us on a weekly or shared ownership basis. If you pay your rent to another housing association you are not our tenant.*

*We do not want anyone who lives in a property we own to have any problems. We are willing to help put anything right where we are in a position to do so. If you have a problem with a property that we own and let us know we will respond, so far as we can, in accordance with this procedure and let you know what we are doing and why.*

*This document is available in alternative format, for example easy-read, on request.*

## **Introduction**

- 1.1. Funding Affordable Homes Housing Association Limited (**FAHHA**) is committed to providing good quality homes and an excellent service. Sometimes things go wrong and when that happens, we want to put things right as quickly as possible.
- 1.2. We want our customers to have confidence that we listen, learn and take prompt action to put matters right. We strive to provide a fair and effective resolution to any complaint and use what we learn from this process to drive service improvements across our business.
- 1.3. We promote a positive complaints handling culture among colleagues and customers, viewing them as an opportunity to put things right quickly, promote positive customer relationships and provide a learning opportunity.
- 1.4. This Procedure should be read in conjunction with our Complaints Policy.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. This Procedure applies to our tenants. By tenants we mean people who have a lease, tenancy, licence or service occupancy or other arrangement to occupy premises owned or managed by us, who pay their rent to us on a weekly or shared ownership basis, including ex-occupiers if they were in occupation at the time the matter complained of arose. We also accept complaints from applicants for properties owned or managed by us. We will accept complaints from representatives acting on behalf of a tenant.
- 2.2. This Procedure does not apply to tenants of properties managed by a managing housing association on behalf of FAHHA, or where the matter relates to services provided by a care provider. If you pay your rent to another housing association you are not our tenant. At many of the properties FAHHA owns we partner with established managing housing associations and care providers, who are able to provide a local, responsive and customer-focused service to residents, and have their own experienced, professional staff, complaints policies and procedures. FAHHA works closely with those managing housing associations and care providers to ensure that the service residents of those properties receive meets the high standards we strive for.

## **3. Equality and Diversity**

At FAHHA we value inclusiveness, and we are committed to embedding equality and diversity at the heart of our work. We aim to be an inclusive organisation, where individual differences are respected, where staff and people who use services, as well as their families and carers, are treated with dignity and on the basis of their merits, abilities and needs, and where everyone has a fair opportunity to fulfil their potential without suffering discrimination or disadvantage.

## **4. Personnel Responsible for the Procedure**

- 4.1. The Board of FAHHA has overall responsibility for this Procedure, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under it. All grievances raised are to be reported to the Chair of the Board and to the next following Board meeting.

4.2. The Chief Executive Officer has day-to-day operational responsibility for this Procedure and must ensure that all staff who may deal with concerns or investigations under this Procedure receive regular and appropriate training.

4.3. The Chief Executive Officer, in conjunction with the FAHHA Board, will review this Procedure from a legal and operational perspective at least every two years.

4.4. Any complaint investigation shall be conducted in an impartial manner, and the designated complaints officer will:

- 4.4.1. deal with complaints on their merits;
- 4.4.2. act independently and have an open mind;
- 4.4.3. take measures to address any actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- 4.4.4. consider all information and evidence carefully; and
- 4.4.5. keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.

4.5. In some circumstances FAHHA may need to exercise discretion in how to respond to a complaint and in those cases the designated complaints officer or a senior manager will have the power to exercise discretion. In those circumstances FAHHA acknowledges it should exercise discretion appropriately and provide a clear explanation to the customer when doing so.

## **5. Stages of the procedure**

5.1. Complaints can be made via any of our contact methods:

- 5.1.1. verbally in person, by phoning 020 3995 5616; or
- 5.1.2. in writing, by emailing [info@fundingaffordablehomes.com](mailto:info@fundingaffordablehomes.com); or
- 5.1.3. in writing by letter to:

Funding Affordable Homes Housing Association Limited  
18 Savile Row  
London W1S 3PW

5.2. Should we receive a complaint via a representative or advocate, permission will need to be provided by the customer, where possible.

5.3. If the customer needs any support or assistance in making a complaint, including if they would find it easier to contact and correspond with us by an alternative method to those outlined above, then we will support or provide details of other organisations that can help as appropriate.

### *5.4. Informal resolution*

5.4.1. In some circumstances it may be possible to resolve the matter there and then, or, if the issue may be capable of resolution with just a few straightforward actions, we will propose that this is dealt with informally. We will agree this with you, and if you want to raise a formal complaint you can.

5.4.2. Examples of matters that may be capable of informal resolution include a missed appointment, a delay in providing a response or not carrying out a scheduled task, such as gardening.

- 5.4.3. Informal resolution will normally be dealt with by the person who receives the report unless it falls well outside of their remit. We will ask you to explain why you are unhappy, the outcome you are seeking and how best to contact you. We will confirm with you what actions we will be taking and when you can expect to hear from us again.
- 5.4.4. Any issues that are raised and dealt with by way of informal resolution and the outcome will be recorded by FAHHA.

### *5.5. Stage 1 Complaint*

- 5.5.1. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with by the designated complaints officer. The customer will be contacted within 5 working days of reporting the concern to FAHHA, unless the customer speaks to the designated complaints officer at the time the complaint is made.
- 5.5.2. The designated complaints officer will contact the customer, by phone if possible, to acknowledge receipt of the complaint, to confirm understanding of the complaint, and to find out what resolution the customer seeks. The complaint will be logged onto our case management system and the customer will be provided with confirmation of who will be managing the case.
- 5.5.3. FAHHA aim to provide the customer with a response within 10 working days of receipt of the complaint. If this is not possible, FAHHA will contact the customer to provide an explanation and a date when the response will be provided. This will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.

### *5.6. Escalation to Stage 2*

- 5.6.1. If the customer is unhappy with the response provided then they can either speak to FAHHA to discuss any concerns so that we can explore if there is anything further that can be done, or can request for the complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.
- 5.6.2. When requesting for a complaint to be escalated FAHHA will require the customer to set out in writing the reasons why they are unhappy with the Stage 1 response and the outcome that the customer is seeking. FAHHA can provide help with this if it is required.
- 5.6.3. Any request to escalate the complaint will need to be made within 20 working days. If no request is made within this timeframe then FAHHA will not normally re-open the complaint unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 5.6.4. There may be occasions when it would not be appropriate to escalate the case to Stage 2, for example if the outcome being sought was not within FAHHA's power or ability to deliver. In cases such as these FAHHA will write to the customer and explain why the complaint will not be escalated and what options are available.

## 5.7. Stage 2 Process

5.7.1. Our Stage 2 process comprises of two options, which are: Compensation Review or a Senior Manager Review. The outcome that you are seeking and the decision made at Stage 1 will help us assess the most appropriate route for your complaint to take.

### 5.7.2. *Compensation Review*

5.7.2.1. A Compensation Review will take place when dissatisfaction with our response concerns compensation, and an increase in the compensation is the only outcome being sought.

5.7.2.2. The Compensation Review will be undertaken by a manager that has not previously been involved in your complaint. They will contact you so that you can set out your position.

5.7.2.3. They will then consider this along with relevant information, including considering whether a remedy should include a payment, and notify you of the decision in writing within 10 working days. If that is not going to be possible, we will notify you and confirm when we will provide the response and this will not exceed a further 10 working days.

5.7.2.4. Along with detailing the reasons behind the decision we will also provide you with the details of what options are available to you should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the review.

### 5.7.3. *Senior Manager Review*

5.7.3.1. The Senior Manager Review can be requested for all cases unless the outcome being sought is solely an increase in compensation. The review involves a Senior Manager, normally executive level or equivalent, who has not previously been involved in the complaint, reviewing FAHHA's handling of the issue and your subsequent complaint.

5.7.3.2. On receipt of your request to escalate your complaint, an admin officer will contact you to find out if you would like to speak to the Manager who will be undertaking the review. The purpose of this call is to provide an opportunity for you to explain your position and for the reviewing Manager to ask you to clarify any points or answer any queries which will assist them in reaching a conclusion.

5.7.3.3. The Reviewing Manager will be provided with the complaint file and any other relevant information to assist them in their review, and you are able to provide them with any information that you have not yet provided to FAHHA.

5.7.3.4. Our aim is to provide you with a response within 20 working days of you having requested escalation of the complaint. If that is not possible, we will contact you and let you know why we are not able to do this and when we will provide the response. This will not exceed a further 10 working days.

#### 5.7.4. *Complaint Resolution*

FAHHA recognise that complaints can be resolved in a number of different ways and as part of the response to a complaint will offer a remedy that reflects the extent of any service failure(s) and the level of detriment this may have caused, taking into account all of the circumstances. This may include; acknowledging where things have gone wrong, providing an explanation, apologising, taking action to correct the issue, offering compensation, and using the feedback to inform improvements or changes to our services. If there are further actions that need to be taken as part of the remedy to a complaint then the complaint will remain open on the system until these have been completed.

### **6. What happens if the complaint is not resolved at Stage 2**

- 6.1. The outcome letter that is sent to the customer following the conclusion of Stage 2 will be FAHHA's final response to the complaint.
- 6.2. If the customer remains dissatisfied then they can contact their local Councillor or Member of Parliament, in their capacity as a designated person, and ask them to look at the case. The designated person can then choose to contact FAHHA about it, or they may instead refer the case straight to the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- 6.3. Another alternative would be for the customer to wait 8 weeks from the date of FAHHA's final response letter and then contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly. Their contact details are:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 152  
Liverpool  
L33 7WQ  
Phone: 0300 111 3000  
Email: [info@housingombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housingombudsman.org.uk)

### **7. Related Policies and Documentation**

This document should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documentation:

- Complaints Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy