



Complaints Procedure

21.10.2024

Next review due: June 2027

*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 by ensuring customers are given a fair chance to set out their position and comment on any adverse findings before a final decision is made, 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 Complaints Procedure is underpinned by and should be read in conjunction with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024 (**Code**). This is a statutory Code which FAHHA is obliged by law to comply with.
- 1.5. This Procedure should also be read in conjunction with our Complaints Policy.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. This Procedure applies to our tenants and leaseholders except for the leaseholders referred at paragraph 2.2 below. By our "tenants and leaseholders" we mean people who have a lease, tenancy, licence or service occupancy or other arrangement to occupy premises directly from FAHHA, including ex-occupiers if they were in occupation at the time the matter complained of arose. We also accept complaints from applicants for properties where the proposed tenancy/lease arrangement is direct with FAHHA. We will accept complaints from representatives acting on behalf of a tenant, with permission from the customer, where possible.
- 2.2. This Procedure does not apply to services provided by a care provider or to leaseholders of properties managed by a managing housing association on behalf of FAHHA at Ryde Village, Ryde and Green Meadows, Freshwater, Isle of Wight, Emerald Gardens and Landmark Pinnacle.,. At these properties which FAHHA owns, we partner with established managing housing associations 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 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. We are committed to ensuring that

the complaints process is accessible to all and to assisting customers who may need support in making a complaint. That may, for example, be through alternative methods of contacting and corresponding with us or through making other reasonable adjustments. We will also refer customers to other organisations which may be able to assist them, where appropriate.

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

- 4.1. The Governance & Compliance Committee (G&CC) 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 G&CC and to the next following G&CC 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 G&CC, will review this Procedure from a legal and operational perspective every three years or sooner in the event of regulatory or legislative changes.
- 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.

#### **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. 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 the customer, and if they want to raise a formal complaint they can. We will always ensure that efforts to resolve a customer's concerns informally do not obstruct access to the Complaints Procedure or result in any unnecessary delay. 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.
- 5.5. 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 the customer to explain why they are unhappy, the outcome they are seeking and how best to contact them. We will confirm with the customer what actions we will be taking and when they can expect to hear from us again. Any issues that are raised and dealt with by way of informal resolution and the outcome will be recorded by FAHHA.
- 5.6. FAHHA will address all points raised in the complaint and will provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

#### *5.7. Stage 1 Complaint*

- 5.7.1. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with by the designated complaints officer. The customer will be contacted and the complaint logged and acknowledged within 5 working days of reporting the concern to FAHHA.
- 5.7.2. 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. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the customer will be asked for clarification and the full definition of the complaint agreed between both parties. 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.
- 5.7.3. FAHHA will provide the customer with a written response within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. 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 and the reasons will be clearly explained to the customer. Whether or not we agree on an extended timeframe, in all cases of extended timeframes, we will provide the customer with contact details of the Housing Ombudsman. If there are further actions that FAHHA needs to take as part of the remedy to the complaint, FAHHA will inform the customer of those within the formal response. The complaint investigation case will be closed but the proposed remedies will be monitored and the customer kept regularly updated.
- 5.7.4. FAHHA will confirm the following to the customer at the completion of Stage 1, in clear, plain language:
- 5.7.4.1. the complaint stage;
  - 5.7.4.2. the complaint definition;
  - 5.7.4.3. the decision on the complaint;
  - 5.7.4.4. the reasons for any decision made;

- 5.7.4.5. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- 5.7.4.6. details of any outstanding actions; and
- 5.7.4.7. details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if the customer is not satisfied with the response.

### *5.8. Escalation to Stage 2*

- 5.8.1. If the customer is unhappy with the response provided then they can request for the complaint to be escalated to Stage 2.
- 5.8.2. Any requests for escalation to Stage 2 must be logged and acknowledged within 5 working days of the escalation request being received by FAHHA.

### *5.9. Stage 2 Process*

- 5.9.1. Our Stage 2 process consists of two options, which are: Compensation Review or a Senior Manager Review. The outcome the customer is seeking and the decision made at Stage 1 will help us assess the most appropriate route for the customer's complaint to take.

#### *5.9.2. Compensation Review*

- 5.9.2.1. 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.
- 5.9.2.2. The Compensation Review will be undertaken by a manager who has not previously been involved in the complaint. They will contact the customer so that the customer can set out their position. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, they will ask the customer for clarification.
- 5.9.2.3. They will then consider this along with relevant information, including considering the level of compensation which should be paid, and notify the customer of the decision in writing within 20 working days of the request for escalation to Stage 2 being acknowledged by FAHHA. If that is not going to be possible, we will notify the customer and confirm when we will provide the response and this will not exceed a further 20 working days. Whether or not we agree on an extended timeframe, in all cases of extended timeframes, we will provide the customer with contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.

#### *5.9.3. Senior Manager Review*

- 5.9.3.1. 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 (**Reviewing Manager**), normally executive level or equivalent, who has not previously been involved in the complaint, reviewing FAHHA's handling of the issue and the subsequent complaint.

5.9.3.2. On receipt of the customer's request to escalate the complaint, an administrative officer will contact the customer to find out if the customer would like a call with the Reviewing Manager who will be undertaking the review. The purpose of this call is to provide an opportunity for the customer to explain their position and for the Reviewing Manager to ask the customer to clarify any points or answer any queries which will assist them in reaching a conclusion.

5.9.3.3. The Reviewing Manager will be provided with the complaint file and any other relevant information to assist them in their review, and the customer is able to provide them with any information that may not yet be provided to FAHHA. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the Reviewing Manager will ask the customer for clarification.

5.9.3.4. Our aim is to provide the customer with a response within 20 working days of the request for escalation to Stage 2 being acknowledged by FAHHA. If that is not possible, we will contact the customer and let them know why we are not able to do this and when we will provide the response. This will not exceed a further 20 working days. Whether or not we agree on an extended timeframe, in all cases of extended timeframes, we will provide the customer with contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.

5.9.4. FAHHA will confirm the following to the customer at the completion of Stage 2, in clear, plain language:

5.9.4.1. the complaint stage;

5.9.4.2. the complaint definition;

5.9.4.3. the decision on the complaint;

5.9.4.4. the reasons for any decision made;

5.9.4.5. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;

5.9.4.6. details of any outstanding actions; and

5.9.4.7. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the customer is not satisfied with the response.

#### 5.9.5. *Complaint Resolution*

5.9.5.1. FAHHA recognises 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, assistance or reasons, apologising, taking action to correct the issue, offering a financial remedy, and using the feedback to inform improvements or changes to policies, procedures or practices. Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the customer as a result of any fault identified.

5.9.5.2. 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.

5.9.5.3. FAHHA will take account of the guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

## 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 the Housing Ombudsman Service directly. Their contact details are:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 1484  
Unit D  
Preston  
PR2 0ET

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

or follow this link:

[Contact us Housing Ombudsman Service](#)

An online complaints form can be accessed here: [online complaints form](#)

## 7. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code 2024
- Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory framework

## 8. 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
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Compensation policy

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09.12.2020	23.11.22
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