



SOLIHULL COMMUNITY HOUSING

POLICY FOR CUSTOMER COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

Introduction

Solihull Community Housing (SCH) is committed to continuously improve services through learning from customer feedback. All feedback is valuable to us as an organisation. If customers compliment us or complain about our services we need to understand why so that we can develop service delivery.

Aims of the Policy

The aim of the policy is to demonstrate that the vision and values of SCH are transparent in all our contacts with customers and that we are a learning organisation that encourages two way communications. Customers need to know that we welcome feedback and will use this to improve services. The aims are to celebrate success and avoid repeating ways of working that are not in the best interests of customers. SCH aims to provide efficient and effective services that meet the needs of our customers. Reducing levels of dissatisfaction and the need for customers to contact us will help us deliver value for money, spending more time on service delivery than investigating service failures.

SCH Vision and Values

Vision:

Our vision is to provide safe, comfortable and secure homes, which create and support communities and contribute to the regeneration of Solihull. We will do this through responsive services which meet the needs of, and give opportunities to, our diverse communities.

Values:

- To keep our promises
- To work with others
- To be approachable
- To be caring
- To make sure everyone's views are heard

- To be efficient
- To be a good employer

The Complaints / Compliments Process

Glossary of Terms

- A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action or standard of service whether provided directly by SCH or by a person or contractor working on our behalf and requires a formal response
- An **expression of dissatisfaction** is a comment or informal complaint from a service user about the way we deliver services but does not require specific investigation / response (can be dealt with at the first point of contact)
- A **compliment** is a positive statement made by a customer about a service provided by or on behalf of SCH, or about the helpfulness, attitude or approach of a member of staff.

Making a Complaint or Compliment

Complaints or compliments can be made by:

- Telephone
- Letter
- E-mail
- Personal visit to an office
- Online
- Text message

Informal Complaints / Expressions of Dissatisfaction

Customers should be encouraged to contact the person who they have been dealing with to advise of any informal complaints or ways in which we could provide a better service. This will give us the opportunity to put things right before getting to the stage of a formal complaint. SCH will try to resolve the problem at the first point of contact through an informal route, but if this is not possible then the formal complaints policy will be used.

Formal Complaints

Stage 1 - dealing with your complaint (target 10 working days)

At this stage a supervisor within the relevant team will investigate the complaint. An acknowledgement should be sent to the complainant within 3 working days of receiving the complaint advising of the name of the investigating officer.

Wherever possible personal contact (visit, telephone call, interview) should be made with the complainant in order to get full details of the service failure and reach a resolution that all parties are happy with.

Within 10 working days the investigating officer should provide a full response to the complainant or give an update on progress and a revised date for resolution of the complaint (e.g. if it is particularly complex or delays due to needing to speak to third parties).

When a complaint investigation has been completed the full findings should be confirmed in writing to the complainant and the customer must be advised of the procedure in the event that they remain dissatisfied with the response i.e. moving onto stage two.

The investigating officer must also send details of the investigation, copies of all correspondence and the investigation template (learning points / actions required to prevent future service failures must be completed) to the Service Improvement Team.

If a customer is not satisfied with the response at stage 1 then they should contact the Service Improvement Team within 10 working days of receiving the final notification of findings at stage 1 and request that the complaint move to stage 2.

Stage 2 - customer remains dissatisfied (target 15 working days)

If a customer is not happy with our first response (stage 1) then they can request that the complaint move to stage 2. A senior manager outside the service area involved in the complaint will then investigate.

An acknowledgement should be sent to the complainant within 3 working days of receiving the request to move to stage 2 advising of the name of the manager carrying out the investigation.

The complaint investigating manager will meet with the complainant (wherever possible) and relevant staff to gather details regarding the complaint.

The investigating manager will write a detailed report of findings including recommendations to avoid similar situations arising in the future.

The investigating manager will aim to conclude the investigation and advise the complainant of the findings and recommendations within 15 working days. If the complaint cannot be dealt with in the time limit, the customer should be contacted to explain the reason for the delay and agree a revised target date for resolution.

If a customer is not satisfied with the response at stage 2 then they should contact the Service Improvement Team within 10 working days of receiving the notification of findings at stage 2 and request that the complaint move to stage 3.

An acknowledgement should be sent to the complainant within 3 working days of receiving the request to move to stage 3 advising of the name of the manager carrying out the investigation.

Stage 3 - final review by Panel of SCH Board Members (target 15 working days)

If a customer is not happy with our response (stage 2) then they can request that the complaint move to stage 3, which is the final step in the formal process. A panel of SCH Board members will then review the complaint.

Within 10 working days the complainant should be invited to attend a Panel meeting. If the customer does not wish to attend in person they can either send a written statement or ask the panel to review the investigations that have taken place at the first two stages.

The customer can expect us to:

- Give at least 5 working days notice of the date of the panel meeting
- Allow them to bring a friend or representative to the meeting to speak on their behalf
- Send written confirmation of the panel's findings within 3 working days of the meeting
- Provide contact details of the Local Government Ombudsman in the event that the customer still remains dissatisfied after the panel meeting has reviewed the complaint.

Performance Management Framework

Complaint and Compliment trends will be reported to:

- ALMO Monthly Monitoring Meetings
- SCH Board (Quarterly)
- ALMO Monitoring – annual report comparing trends on customer satisfaction, expressions of dissatisfaction, customer contacts and formal complaints.
- SCH Board - annual report comparing trends on customer satisfaction, expressions of dissatisfaction, customer contacts and formal complaints

Links with other ways of collecting customer feedback

- SCH Contact Days
- STATUS and Mini STATUS surveys
- Customer satisfaction surveys
- Tenant and Leaseholder Newsletter
- Frontline exit surveys
- Customer Involvement Panels
- Online satisfaction surveys

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