



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

# YMCA RHG Supported Housing Policy

Complaints Policy

April 2024 / Version 3



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YMCA ROBIN HOOD GROUP

**Everyone should have a fair chance to discover who they are and what they can become.**

## About YMCA

YMCA believes in fairness and opportunity. There are essential building blocks for a full and rewarding life: a safe home; acceptance; guidance; friendship; physical and mental health; academic support; employment skills; and access to real opportunities. Many young people have never known these things; other people have lost one or more as they grew up, but we all need them. All of us. At YMCA, we provide these critical foundations for a fresh, strong start for young people and a better quality of life in the community.

## Version History

Version No.	Date Completed	Section(s)	Description of change(s)
2	26th July 2023	Updated all sections	To meet the Housing Ombudsman code of conduct
3	03 <sup>rd</sup> April 2024	Updated section 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.  Stage 3 of the complaints process removed. Now has 12 sections.	To meet the Housing Ombudsman code of conduct changes from the 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024

## Supported Housing Complaints Policy Statement

YMCA Robin Hood Group Supported Housing aims to deliver a high standard of service to all its customer. However, we recognise that sometimes things go wrong, or that the services we offer may not always meet our customer expectations.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Empower Customers to make complaints and to have the situation reviewed by staff.
- Allow the YMCA Robin Hood Group the opportunity to rectify mistakes and provide an opportunity to learn from when things go wrong.
- Highlight any areas of common complaint, which may indicate areas for improvement with procedures and policy which will be reviewed.
- Increase Customer engagement and satisfaction.
- Create a climate in which complaints are seen as an opportunity to improve our service to drive positive change

### 1. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined as; an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual Customer or group of Customers.

If the complaint is about a staff member, the complaint will be referred to management in the first instance. The complaint should be treated confidentially and not recorded on Inform. The Manager should notify People & Culture and the Safeguarding lead if the complaint is related to a safeguarding concern as detailed in the safeguarding policy.

The manager receiving complaint need to recognise the difference between service request, for example, a repair request or a report about an Anti-Social Behaviour incident. A service request can result in situation that the customer is unhappy about. A complaint about YMCA Robin Hood Group is about the service they have not had or received, which has led to a failure of service, for example a delay in completing a repair, failure to meet service standards, failure to apply policy.

If YMCA Robin Hood Group does not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process. The customer will be given details of the correct policy and procedure to refer to and has the right to take the decision to the Ombudsman.

Complaint exclusions may include:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.

## 2. Equality, accessibility, and awareness

We want to ensure all our customers are able to complain using a method that is accessible to them, and where appropriate we will support with interpreters and accepting complaints from third parties, to ensure all its customers have equal access to the complaint's procedure.

We will consider the vulnerability or specific requirements of the customer when manage and responding to complaints, which includes providing an interpreter to support with any languages barriers.

Complaints will be accepted in writing or verbally by the customer or on behalf of the customer through a third party.

If a complaint is made by third party organisation on behalf of the customer, the outcome of the complaint will be shared with the customer, unless the customer has provided consent to a data sharing form, signed by the customer.

If a customer wants to be supported by another customer to attend a meeting and hearings – this will be supported. Consent to support needs to be agreed and a data sharing agreement signed by the resident.

## 3. Complaint handling personnel

A complaint can be made in several ways, complaints form, verbally, telephone call, email, website, letter, or text message.

The staff member receiving the complaint must accept the complaint in whatever way that the customer chooses to make it. There must be no instruction that the complaint must be put in writing.

The staff member should record the complaint on the Customer Relationship Management System, Inform and assign the complaint to the Housing Services Manager to be reviewed and investigated.

Complaints will be managed by the personnel below:

Stage 1: Housing Services Manager

Stage 2: Operations Manager

If a matter can be put right immediately, at the first stage, and the customer does not want it to be investigated further, then the complaint can be resolved immediately. Details of the complaint and the action taken, and outcome will be recorded on Inform and a formal response provided to the customer of the action taken to support continuous improvement.

If the complaint is about a complaint handler, the complaint will be escalated to a senior complaint manager to investigate and handle the complaint

## 4. Complaint handling principles

When a customer makes a complaint, staff should always offer the customer the opportunity to put the complaint through the formal procedure and explain how the procedure works. Staff need to be aware that we encourage customers to use the complaints policy so that we can identify where we can improve our

service. We will consider the vulnerability or specific requirements of the customer when manage and responding to complaints. Each complaint should be investigated on an individual basis without judgement and all relevant information and evidence should be carefully considered. The complainant should have the opportunity to set out their position.

If the complaint can not be investigated and responded within the timescales, suitable intervals should be agreed with the complainant to keep them informed on the progress.

Complaints process will be following the steps below:

- Acknowledgement of the complaint and where appropriate apologising when things have gone wrong.
- Complaint to be recorded and details of the customer will be attached to the complaint.
- Response to the complaint within the timescales detailing.
- The complaint stages.
- The decision on the complaint
- The reasons for any decisions made.
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions
- Details of how to escalate the matter if the resident is not satisfied with the outcome

Acknowledging a complaint:

- Staff receiving and acknowledging complaints should remain professional and demonstrate the core values of care, honesty, respect, and responsibility and where appropriate apologising when things have gone wrong. The complaint handler should continue to:
- Be respectful by being polite.
- Show care and listen to the points being made by the customer.
- Demonstrate integrity by not interrupting or defend the points being made.
- Take responsibility by providing clear information on what will happen next.
- Provide solutions until the complaint has been investigated and facts identified.

## **5. The Complaint Stages**

Stage 1: Complaint

Stage 2: Complaint Final Review

If the customer is dissatisfied, they can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

If the complaint is in relation to access to our waiting list, they should be referred to the appeals procedure as detailed in the Lettings Policy.

If you are appealing against an eviction decision you have no right to reside pending decision.

## **6. Stage 1 of the Complaint**

The complaint should be acknowledged within 5 working days and the outcome should be completed in writing within 10 working days of the acknowledgement letter.

If the complaint is complex and additional time is needed to complete a full investigation, and extension must be agreed with the complainant and should not exceed more than 10 working days, or should not be applied

without good reason. The reason for the extension should be clearly explained to the complainant and include the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.

The outcome of the complaint should detail:

- the complaint stage
- the decision on the complaint
- the reasons for any decisions made.
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right
- details of any outstanding actions
- an action plan of any outstanding actions with timescales for completion.
- details of how to escalate the matter to stage two if the resident is not satisfied with the outcome.

## **7. Stage 2 of the Complaint – Final Review**

If the customer is not satisfied, they can request for complaint to be reconsidered for final review. The complaint should be passed to the Operations Manager, and the complaint review should be acknowledged within 5 working days and the outcome should be completed in writing within 20 working days of the acknowledgement letter.

If the complaint is complex and additional time is needed to complete a full investigation, and extension must be agreed with the complainant and should not exceed more than 20 working days, or should not be applied without good reason. The reason for the extension should be clearly explained to the complainant and include the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.

The outcome of the complaint should detail:

- the complaint stage
- the complaint definition
- the decision on the complaint
- the reasons for any decisions made
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right
- details of any outstanding actions
- an action plan of any outstanding actions with timescales for completion.
- details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.
- A feedback survey form

Please note: If other complaints come to light during the investigation these must be treated as a new and separate complaint and handled according to the procedure outlined above.

## 8. Housing Ombudsman

If the complainant remains unsatisfied the customer can refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman, contact details below:

Complaint form: Fill in the online complaint form

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

Phone: 0300 111 3000 - Calls are recorded for training and monitoring purposes.

Write: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Please note: The Housing Ombudsman would strongly encourage customers to use email or the online complaint form rather than sending post to our PO Box address in Liverpool as there will be delays. Please do not send original documents by post as we are unable to post them back to you. Also note that we will not be able to deal with large bundles of documents by post.

The Director of Supported Housing will be the liaison contact for complaints reported to the Housing Ombudsman.

Contact will be made through the Business Resource Centre.

Email: [BRC.Reception@ymcarhg.org](mailto:BRC.Reception@ymcarhg.org)

Phone: 0115 837 1871

## 9. Reviewing our complaints to improve our service

All complaints are recorded on our customer relationship management system, Inform. Reports are shared with the Executive Leadership each month.

Complaints are received positively and will be investigated without judgement to provide the opportunity to enact positive change where appropriate, this is achieved with.

- having a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments;
- taking collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- acting within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

Complaints are reviewed monthly to monitor trends to identify lessons learned and ensure improvements are made to improve the service to our customers. Next steps and actions are agreed and policies and procedures amended if required.

It is important that the Senior Management Team ensures that complaints are used to improve our services. For example, to address failures in service, to improve communication with Customers, to listen to the views of the Customers and see how our service can be improved.



## 10. Putting things right

A robust complaints policy is essential to put right any failures in service and to ensure that improvements are implemented to the services where reasonably practical to do so. Our aim is to get things right first time, therefore all staff receive a full induction and ongoing training, and complaints are assessed to identify any training needs.

Managers receive training on the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Complaints are reviewed weekly at the housing managers meetings and shared with the Executive Leadership Team.

A quarterly report on complaint is completed and shared with the Board of Trustees.

An annual report on complaints is produced for analysis to support with continuous improvement.

The complaints reports include:

- Updates on the volume, categories and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance;
- Reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling;
- Updates on the outcomes of the Ombudsman's investigations and progress made in complying with orders related to severe maladministration findings; and
- annual complaints performance and service improvement report

## 11. Self-assessment and compliance

A summary of complaints and outcomes will be reviewed by the appointed Board of Trustees committee on a quarterly and annual basis. They will provide an audit function to ensure best practices are being applied.

## 12. Policy review


This policy: Will be reviewed annually if a restructure or changes to the organisation occurs and or if legislation changes.



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