



Complaints Policy

March 2021

Review Process

Policy review frequency:

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years

Responsible for review:

This policy will be reviewed by: Chrysalis Executive Board

Version Control

Version	Date approved:	Next review date:	Author / Title:
1.0	Mar-21	Mar-23	Chrysalis Executive Board



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1. Policy Aim

We aim to provide our customers with good quality homes and services. Sometimes things don't go to plan and we want to put them right as quickly as possible.

This policy sets out our approach towards handling complaints and should be read alongside the Compensation policy.

2. Scope

Complaint Definition

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Chrysalis, our colleagues, or those acting on our behalf.

Who can complain?

We accept complaints from our customers, or anyone directly impacted by our housing related or other services, including service applicants. We will also accept complaints from someone acting on behalf of a customer.

We all expect to be treated with courtesy. When this doesn't happen, we might need to limit how we communicate with customers. There's more information on this in Appendix 3.

What the policy doesn't cover

This policy does not cover:

- cases where a legal claim is made against Chrysalis, including disrepair cases and insurance claims (if the claim occurs after the complaint has been raised, we will then close the complaint).
- cases where a customer is taking a matter to court, or the matter is being dealt with by another statutory agency that has the power to resolve the complaint (if the claim occurs after the complaint has been raised, we will then close the complaint)
- complaints of anti-social behaviour as these are covered by Chrysalis' Anti-Social Behaviour policy but a complaint will be accepted if the customer is dissatisfied with how their case was handled.
- issues which are over 6 months old unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We will provide a detailed explanation if we don't accept a complaint and a customer can approach the Ombudsman if they do not agree with this decision

Complaints relating to staff conduct will be fully investigated in line with our HR policies, but we cannot divulge the outcome of these investigations for reasons of confidentiality. We will, however, explain what our investigation involved.

3. Principles of the complaints policy

How to complain

Complaints can be made in a number of ways:

- By phone through our general enquiries line by calling: 0300 3655 4040
- By email: complaints@chrysalishousing.co.uk
- Completing the complaints form on-line at: www.chrysalishousing.co.uk
- In writing to: Chrysalis Supported Association Ltd, 3 Brook Office Park, Ground Floor, Bristol, BS16 7FL.
- We do not accept or operate a reporting of complaints function via social media
- Directly to any of our colleagues in person
- Via a representative or advocate (we must have written permission from the customer with consent to discuss confidential information)

What will happen?

Stage One – Complaint investigation and resolution

Where possible we aim to resolve the complaint there and then. If we can't, we will refer it to the person or department best placed to help. They will make contact by the end of the next working day.

We will write within 10 working days after we receive a complaint to explain the outcome of our investigation, how we will resolve the complaint and the timescales. If we can't, we'll explain why and write again within a further 10 working days.

After we have agreed the resolution and confirmed our decision in writing, we will monitor progress until all actions are complete.

Escalation

If the complainant is dissatisfied with our resolution and asks us to, we will escalate to Stage Two. We will need to know why they are dissatisfied and what will resolve the complaint.

Stage Two – Complaint review and resolution

The Senior Administration Team or someone not involved at Stage One will carry out a review of the complaint, in some circumstances in partnership with a senior manager or operational Director.

We will make contact within two working days to give complainants the opportunity to explain their side of things.

We will write with the outcome and next steps within 20 working days of the request to escalate. If we can't, we'll explain why and write again within a further 10 working days.

After we've agreed the resolution and confirmed our decision in writing, we'll monitor progress until all actions are complete.

The Complaints Process:

4. Other Options Available to Customers

Designated person

A social housing tenant may approach a 'designated person' (as set out in the Localism Act 2011) where they are still dissatisfied after exhausting our complaints process. These are 'designated persons':

- MP (Member of Parliament)
- Councillor
- Tenant Panel or Tenant Advocates

The role of a 'designated person' is to help resolve tenant complaints by:

- providing advice to tenants
- advocating on their behalf
- discussing matters with the landlord
- engaging with other designated persons
- carrying out other actions.

They may also refer complaints to the Housing Ombudsman if they are unable to resolve a complaint directly with us and the complainant agrees.

Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman Service can provide advice and support to residents throughout the life of a complaint. If the complaint remains unresolved at the end of the complaint process, customers can contact them to request a review. They must wait eight weeks unless a designated person refers the complaint.

Contact details:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool L33 7WQ
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Web: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Complaints about care services (even if these are not operated by us or under our management)

Complaints about care services can be taken to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Any customer receiving care services may choose to access their local council's complaints process instead of ours before approaching the Ombudsman.

Contact details:

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
PO Box 47771
Coventry CV4 0EH
Telephone: 0300 061 0614
Web: www.lgo.org.uk

Consumer Credit Regulated Activity

Complaints about welfare benefits advice can be taken to the Financial Ombudsman Service if you are not satisfied with our response.

Contact details:

The Financial Ombudsman Service Exchange Tower
Harbour Exchange Square London
E14 9GE
Telephone: 0800 023 4567
Email: complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk
Web: <https://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/>

First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber – Residential Property)

Customers can apply if they are a landlord, tenant, freeholder or leaseholder. The cases that can be considered include:

- Rent increases for fair or market rates
- Leasehold disputes e.g. variable service charges
- Leasehold enfranchisement e.g. extending a lease

Contact details:

Web: www.gov.uk/housing-tribunals

Appendices

- Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) – Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- Equality Act 2010
- Chrysalis – Accessible Services Policy
- Chrysalis – Acceptable Behaviour Policy
- Chrysalis – Vulnerable Adults Policy

Learning from complaints

We treat complaints as an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and improve our service. Complaint numbers, outcomes and satisfaction inform policy reviews and the way we deliver our services.

Senior managers across the business will meet monthly to review the level and nature of complaints. This will enable trends and root causes to be identified so we don't repeat

our mistakes.

Our involved residents will be encouraged to play a key role in our complaint's performance and service. They will be invited annually or earlier to review how we have managed and handled complaints.

We will report openly in our Annual Report the number, nature and outcome of all complaints.

Complaints are monitored and reported on extensively, from individual one to one meetings, team meetings, complaints reports at senior management meetings through to our Board meetings. They are a key feature of our annual Report and how we are managing our relationship with our tenants.

We regularly monitor compliance with policy and procedures through regular review and ongoing training and seek to address any weaknesses with our operational performance as appropriate.

Persistent/Abusive Customers

We accept that at times people may act in a way that is generally out of character, especially in times of trouble or distress. We accept that a customer may become upset, disappointed or frustrated by our action or inaction when contacting us. We will also review whether any reasonable adjustments are required.

However, actions of customers who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unreasonable demands on, or unacceptable behaviour towards, our colleagues.

The following actions are considered unreasonable or vexatious:

- Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour
- Unreasonable Demands
- Unreasonable Persistence

Aggressive or Abusive Behaviour

Colleagues should be treated with courtesy and respect. Anger in respect of a complaint may be understandable but it must not escalate into aggression towards our colleagues.

Physical violence; language (spoken or written) or behaviour which makes colleagues feel fearful, threatened or abused is not acceptable. Such behaviours can include making derogatory personal remarks; being rude; inflammatory statements or making unsubstantiated allegations.

Unreasonable Demands

Where the demands of a customer substantially affect our colleagues causing a negative impact on other customers or workload, we will consider them unreasonable.

This can include demanding responses within an unreasonable timescale; constant contact whether by phone, email or in writing; repeatedly changing the subject of a complaint or raising unrelated issues and insisting on speaking or seeing specific colleagues.

Unreasonable Persistence

We will consider actions to be unreasonably persistent when a customer refuses to accept a decision made in relation to a complaint; refuses to accept explanations relating to what we can and cannot do or continues to pursue a case without presenting any new information or evidence.

Where customers refuse to modify their behaviour when requested, a Head of Service may make the decision to deal with them outside of the complaints policy and/or restrict a customer's access to our services.

All such restrictions would be communicated to the customer in writing and must explain how the restriction has been applied and how they can continue to contact us about emergencies and urgent issues.

Restricting Contact

We may channel the contact we have with customers through agreed and appropriate routes. This may include:

- Restricting contact to one of the following only:
 - In person
 - By phone
 - In writing
 - By email
- Allocating a specific person to deal with calls or correspondence, limiting the contact the customer can make with any other colleague.
- Advising the customer that we will only respond to them on a certain frequency i.e. once a week, regardless of how often they contact us.
- Where customers repeat the same issues, we will only respond to new issues; where they raise issues, we have dealt with before, we will refer them to our previous responses.
- We may ask that you appoint a representative to speak on your behalf.

We reserve the right to take legal or possession action, if a customer behaves in such a way that they are breaking the law, or it breaches their tenancy or the terms of their license.

Policy Controls Sheet

Date of Review: 15/03/21

Reviewed By: Colin Mackell, CEO

Approved By: Board

Date of Approval: 15/03/21

The Complaints Policy was reviewed and amended in response to the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's revised Code for Complaints and due to the growing complexity of Chrysalis' operating model and the acceptance after review that we needed a policy

that reflects our values and that works for our tenants.

Also to highlight the inclusion and need for review of performance and the desire to continue to improve our services by our operational teams and our involvement of our residents on an annual basis or more frequently.

The amendments to this policy include:

- Adoption of the Ombudsman's definition of a complaint;
- Revised timelines for investigating and responding to a complaint, including additional written correspondence to the resident;
- Clarity on dealing with complaints received via social media
- Advising the resident of their right to go to the Housing Ombudsman at any point in the complaint's process.

Section 2: to make clear that the policy applies to all Chrysalis contractors and agents, although all correspondence with residents is always undertaken by Chrysalis.

Section 4.3: Sets out the new two stage complaints process. Under this revised policy, stage 1 is Complaint Investigation and Resolution, and stage 2 is the Senior Manager Review.

Section 5.0: Monitoring and Evaluation. To note that senior managers across the business will meet regularly to review and levels and nature of complaints.



Chrysalis is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, with registered number 29818R, set up for the benefit of the community as a not for profit organisation, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and is also a Non-Profit Private Registered Provider of Social Housing Registered Number: 4751, Regulated by The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). CSA are members of the Housing Ombudsman and subscribe to their standards of complaints management and fair practice procedures for all tenants. Registered Office 3 Brook Office Park, Emersons Green, Bristol BS16 7FL.