

Park Hill Housing Cooperative Complaints Policy

This policy sets out the Park Hill Housing Cooperative (PHHC) Complaints Policy through the following:

1. Aims of the complaints policy
2. What we mean by a complaint
3. Exclusions
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. The complaints process
6. Putting things right
7. Monitoring and reporting
8. Policy review

The PHHC Complaints Policy and Procedure follow the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code 2024.

1. Aims of the Complaints Policy

The PHHC Complaints Policy aims are to ensure that:

- Members and others have the right to complain about the provision, or non-provision of services through an accessible, confidential and easy to use procedure, which offers rapid action and response
- Complaints are dealt with effectively and fairly, even where complaint outcomes are not to the satisfaction of the complainant
- Complaints are taken seriously and used positively to improve how PHHC operates
- The PHHC complaints procedure complies with the Tenancy, Influence and Accountability Standard and with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024

We will always aim to respond quickly within the timeframes set out in the PHHC Complaints Procedure but, as a very small housing co-operative that relies on the voluntary work of members who may only be able to meet infrequently and the professional work of a part-time Managing Agent (MA), realistically we might not always be able to achieve these. We will endeavour to keep the complainant informed if the target times cannot be achieved and the reasons why.

2. What We Mean by a Complaint

The Housing Ombudsman Service defines a complaint as:

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the co-operative, by the Managing Agent or by others acting on the co-operative's behalf, affecting an individual member or group of members. (The Confederation of Co-operative Housing, Complaints and Housing Co-operatives, 2024)

A complaint, whether justified or not, may be about something that PHHC should or should not have done or has done badly or not done in accordance with our policies. A complaint may also be about a complainant feeling that they have not been treated fairly or they have been discriminated against in the provision of a service.

3. Exclusions

A complaint will be considered unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If this is the case, an explanation in writing will be given to the complainant along with details of how they can appeal to the Housing Ombudsman.

Exclusions include:

- Requests for a particular service (e.g., a complaint about a repair or something else that has not yet been requested)
- Requests to deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB) or a neighbour dispute, which should be dealt with in accordance with the relevant PHHC policies and procedures. If you have asked PHHC to address an ASB or neighbour dispute and are not happy with the way that we have managed it, you may then make a complaint under the Complaints Policy
- New issues that arise during a complaints investigation unless they are relevant to the complaint under investigation
- Matters that relate to legal proceedings that have started
- Complaints about something more than 12 months old
- Matters that have already been considered under the complaints policy
- Issues relating to the way PHHC is governed which need to be dealt with through the PHHC Code of Conduct

Complaints made in an unacceptable or vexatious manner may not be considered or different circumstances for handling may be applied, for example:

- Correspondence via email or letter only
- A representative is appointed to manage the complaint on behalf of the complainant
- Reduced contact with the complainant where excessively large numbers of complaints are raised (often duplicated and the frequency of contact is disproportionate to the magnitude of the issue)
- Anonymous complaints

Not progressing complaints will be a last resort as the intent is always to collaborate with members to resolve their issues where possible. However, if the Complaints Officer chooses not to receive a complaint for one of the above reasons, they will formally write to the complainant setting out the reasons why.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The PHHC Managing Agent (MA) is the appointed Complaints Officer who deals with complaints, anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes. As an external supplier to PHHC they will be independent to the complaint. The Complaints Officer takes responsibility for:

- Ensuring that receipt of the complaint is acknowledged and logged
- Confirming in writing to the complainant what the complainant is complaining about (defining the complaint)
- Investigating the complaint
- Deciding their approach to resolution of the complaint
- Communication with the complainant throughout and regarding the outcomes
- Ensuring that all outcomes of the complaint are implemented

A member of the Management Committee is allocated as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) who provides scrutiny and oversight of complaints.

Where a complaint involves the MA, the MRC will work with the MC to appoint a panel of PHHC members to undertake the Complaints Procedure.

Reasonable adjustments for individual members needs will be considered and discussed with the complainant under the Equality Act 2010, where appropriate.

5. The Complaints Process

PHHC has a two-stage complaints procedure, which is detailed in the PHHC Complaints Procedure.

6. Putting Things Right

Actions taken to address complaints may include:

- Apologising
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons
- Taking action if there has been a delay
- Reconsidering or changing a decision
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum
- Providing a financial remedy
- Changing policies, practices or procedures

7. Monitoring and Reporting

PHHC is committed to a positive complaint handling culture, which is integral to resolving disputes, gathering feedback and where appropriate improving services for members. A complaint summary is reviewed as part of the Managing Agent's report at every Management Committee meeting. It is important that we learn from the complaints we receive and use them to improve our services.

An annual complaints performance and improvement record will be produced for the Annual General Meeting for members. This will include:

- The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code self-assessment form, which PHHC is required to complete each year
- A qualitative and quantitative analysis of all complaints received by the Complaints Officer
- Any findings of non-compliance
- Any service improvements implemented due to complaints
- Anything relevant from the Housing Ombudsman

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically. It will also be reviewed if there are any changes to the rules, legislation or to the regulatory framework.

Approved by the Management Committee on 15/10/2024