

# RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### **1. Statement of Intent**

- 1.1 The Association is committed to providing a quality service, which meets the needs of our residents. However, sometimes things go wrong and when this happens we need to know about it to help us to improve our service.
- 1.2 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a resident about the standard of service provided by the Association, whether justified or not.
- 1.3 It is the aim of the Association to resolve complaints effectively and as quickly as possible.
- 1.4 The Association is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and reasonably.
- 1.5 The Association recognises that complaints can provide valuable information about service delivery and will use this information to continuously improve services and also to improve the procedure for dealing with complaints.

### **2. Implementation of the Policy**

- 2.1 The Association will provide each tenant with a copy of the complaints policy and procedure.
- 2.2 Copies of the complaints policy, procedure and complaint forms are freely available from the Association's offices.
- 2.3 The Association has a procedure for dealing with complaints and staff will work within the agreed time-scales of the procedure.
- 2.4 All complaints will be treated confidentially and taken seriously. Making a complaint will not affect the way a resident is treated or the service that they receive.
- 2.5 Complaints may be received verbally or in writing from the complainant or someone acting on their behalf. A complaint may also be anonymous.
- 2.6 Every complaint will be recorded and acknowledged where appropriate. (Anonymous complaints will be recorded but not acknowledged).
- 2.7 Every complaint will be investigated (anonymous complaints will be investigated to determine whether the complaint is justified and should be investigated further).
- 2.8 Complainants will be kept informed of progress and the outcome of any investigations.
- 2.9 The Association will try to resolve the complaint at the initial point of contact with the resident or at the earliest possible stage of the complaints procedure.

The Association will consider claims for compensation from complainants who have suffered financial loss. This will be offered by the Functional Manager, Chief Executive or Chair in accordance with delegated authorities and the Association's Compensation policy.

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## **2. Implementation of the Policy**

- 2.10 If a resident is dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint after exhausting the Association's procedure they have the right to complain to the Independent Housing Ombudsman. The Association will co-operate fully with any investigation carried out by the Ombudsman.
- 2.11 Residents who are dissatisfied with the support service they receive, for example a warden service or emergency alarm, have the right to complain to their Supporting People Administering Authority.
- 2.12 There may be some complaints that the Association cannot deal with but will direct the resident to the right organisation. For example, Housing Benefit is the responsibility of the Local Authority and complaints should be made to them and ultimately the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 2.13 If a resident makes numerous complaints about matters that have already been dealt with, the Association may deem the resident to be a vexatious complainant. All complaints made by such a resident will be considered by a senior member of staff who will determine whether or not it should be dealt with as a new complaint or dismissed.

## **3. Responsibility**

- 3.1 The Director of Policy is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

## **4. Monitoring**

- 4.1 Complaints will be monitored in order to establish the scale and type of the problem, develop effective strategies, target resources, assess the impact of the Association's policy, and develop effective performance measures. Complaints will be monitored by category, target times for response, ethnicity, and outcome. The information will be used to improve services and to improve the procedure for dealing with complaints.
- 4.2 Quarterly reports will be made to the Board of Trustees about complaints.
- 4.3 The Association will publish its performance against standards and targets, and any changes that have been made to policies and/or procedures as a result of complaints.

## **5. Review**

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis, including consultation with residents.

This policy applies to the beneficiaries of The Sir James Reckitt Village Haven and Joseph Hornby Stockdale Almshouses.

**March 2007**

This policy can be made available on request in other languages, large type, Braille or in audio format