

Feldon Housing Limited

Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Feldon Housing is committed to high standards of customer service. However, there may be occasions when we get things wrong. We welcome feedback and take any form of complaint seriously. We will try wherever possible to resolve a complaint to the customer's satisfaction. We always try to learn from complaints.
- 1.2. This policy explains how residents can make a complaint if they are not satisfied with our services and how their complaint will be processed.

2. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

- 2.1. This policy has been developed in line with the 2024 Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code.
- 2.2. We will operate our Complaints Policy in compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards 2024 including the Transparency, Accountability and Influence Standard 2024.
- 2.3. This policy also meets any legal obligation outlined in the following legislation:
 - Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
 - Housing Act 1996
 - Localism Act 2011

- Equality Act 2010
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), which works alongside the Data Protection Act 2018.

3. **Scope**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all residents of Feldon Housing who have a legal relationship with us (i.e. are an applicant, tenant, leaseholder, or licensee) or is a former tenant/leaseholder of Feldon Housing who had a current relationship with Feldon Housing when the issue leading to the complaint arose.
- 3.2. This policy also applies to anyone who is affected by the services provided by Feldon Housing. However, the Housing Ombudsman will only investigate complaints made by residents who have or who used to have a legal relationship with Feldon Housing.

4. **Definitions**

- 4.1. **Complainant:** any resident who makes a complaint to Feldon Housing.
- 4.2. **Complaint:** we use the Housing Ombudsman's definition. We define a complaint 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 resident or group of residents.

- 4.3. **Service request:** a request by a resident for service, such as a request for a repair about a missed appointment or reporting issues such as antisocial behavior. If a resident expresses dissatisfaction with how their service request has been handled, it will be treated as a complaint.
- 4.4. **Complaints Officer:** The person responsible for managing residents' complaints at Feldon Housing. At Feldon Housing this is the Housing Manager.
- 4.5. **Member Responsible for Complaints:** The person at Feldon Housing who

leads on making sure this policy is implemented. This is a member of the Board.

- 4.6. **Housing Ombudsman Service:** The Housing Ombudsman Service is a government sponsored, independent body which investigates and resolves complaints about social landlords. The Ombudsman has powers to ask us to resolve complaints in a certain way, including putting things right and paying compensation to tenants. Residents can also contact the Housing Ombudsman for general advice on making complaints about our services. The Housing Ombudsman's investigations are free to complainants.

5. Exclusions

We will not investigate a matter through this complaints policy if:

- 5.1. A resident is complaining about something that happened 12 months ago or longer. However, we will look at each case separately and, in some cases, we may accept the complaint.
- 5.2. The complaint is not related to our services. Where the service being complained about is not delivered by Feldon Housing, we will do our best to advise residents which organisation they should contact.
- 5.3. Residents are making a request for services, such as reporting a repair or another issue, or asking us to deliver a service for the first time.
- 5.4. Where legal proceedings have been started which are connected to the subject of the complaint. In these cases, we will take steps to keep the complainant informed but will not consider a new complaint.
- 5.5. The matter has already been dealt with as part of this policy and the complaints have been closed at the final stage of our complaints handling process.

6 Accessible information and services

- 6.1. Feldon Housing aims to make it easy for anyone to make a complaint. Complaints can be made in any way that is convenient. This includes complaints made by phone, email, in person, or by letter. This also includes another person or organisation of the tenants' choice

supporting them in making the complaint or dealing with us on their behalf if that is the tenant's wish. Where another person is acting on behalf of a tenant we will ask the tenant for permission, ideally in writing.

- 6.2. In line with the Equality Act 2010 we will adjust services, including communication methods, to meet the needs and preferences of residents so that anyone who wishes to make a complaint is able to do so. We will record information about the reasonable adjustments we make for individual residents.
- 6.3. Where we use social media, we will accept complaints through this channel.
- 6.4. We will keep residents informed throughout the complaints process and we will use the preferred communication method to do this. All written communication sent by us will be written in plain English.
- 6.5. Our website, which is under development, will include information on how to make a complaint. This Complaints Policy and process will be easily found and downloadable. We have provided all our tenants with a guide on how to make a complaint, and our complaints policy is available upon request.
- 6.6. We will publish information on our website about how we are performing in managing complaints and show how we are meeting our legal obligation in complaint handling.

7 Roles and responsibilities at Feldon Housing Ltd

- 7.1. All our staff, Board Members, contractors, and anyone delivering services on our behalf are responsible for implementing this policy. We will provide regular training to anyone involved in managing complaints.
- 7.2. Our Housing Manager takes the role of "Complaints Officer." They will:
 - Act sensitively and fairly.
 - Be trained to receive complaints and deal with distressed and upset residents.
 - Have access to staff at all levels to ensure the quick, thorough, and fair resolution of complaints; and
 - Have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly

and fairly, including offering remedies which are proportionate and reflect the impact on tenants.

- 7.3. Our Board has appointed a Member Responsible for Complaints who ensures the governing body receives regular insights into complaint handling performance and champions a positive complaint-handling culture within landlord name. We will publish the name of our Member Responsible for Complaints on our website.

8. Complaints Procedure

- 8.1. Our complaints procedure meets the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code 2024.
- 8.2. We operate a simple two-stage complaints procedure.
- 8.3. Residents can make a complaint however they wish to. This includes but is not limited to by phone, email, letter or in person. We will speak to the residents making the complaint to fully understand the reason for the complaint and what the resident is seeking as a resolution.
- 8.4. Where the issues being raised fall outside of this complaints policy, we will explain the reasons why, in writing.
- 8.5. Where the matter being raised is a complaint we will immediately work on putting right the complaint
- 8.6. Where the matter being raised is a request for service, we will immediately work on dealing with this request.
- 8.7. Where the matter being raised does not fall within the scope of this policy, we will provide advice on where to go for assistance.

Stage 1

- 8.8. **Logging the complaint**
- 8.9. We will log the complaint and send the complainant an acknowledgement in writing within 5 working days (not including weekends and bank holidays). (Related complaints made while the initial complaint is still being investigated will be included as part of the initial complaint.)

8.10. **Investigating and responding to the complaint**

8.11. We will aim to fully investigate and respond to the complainant within 10 working days after logging the complaint. Complex complaints may take longer than 10 working days to resolve. Where this is the case, we will write to the complainant to explain the reasons why the investigation will take longer. When writing to the resident, we will provide the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service. We will not extend the investigation any longer than a further 10 working days except in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the complainant.

8.12. We will send the Stage 1 response letter once the outcome of the complaint is known. We will not wait until outstanding actions are completed if they have not been completed by the time the outcome of the complaint is known.

8.13. The Stage 1 response will explain:

- The complaint stage.
- The complaint definition.
- The decision on the complaint.
- The reasons for any decisions made including any relevant law or policy.
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions.
- Details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if the resident is not satisfied with the response.

8.14. We will always apologise where there has been a service failure and carry out any promised actions in discussion with the tenant.

Stage 2

8.15. If a resident is dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint investigation at Stage 1, the resident can make a request for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2. This is the final stage in the Feldon Housing

complaints process.

- 8.16. The Stage 2 complaint review will be carried out by a Feldon Housing Director.
- 8.17. Although the resident does not need to provide a precise reason why they wish to escalate their complaint, we will contact the resident to try and establish which part of the Stage 1 response they were not happy with.
- 8.18. **Logging the Stage 2 escalation request**
- 8.19. The request to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 will be logged and an acknowledgement will be sent to the resident within 5 working days.
- 8.20. **Reviewing and responding to the complaint at Stage 2**
- 8.21. The Director will review the case and provide a written response to the resident within 20 working days of the request to escalate. If longer is required where we believe there is good reason, we will contact the resident to agree a new timescale. This is the final stage of our complaints process. We will not extend the review past a further 20 days, except in exceptional circumstances and we will discuss this with the resident first. When writing to the resident about the extension, we will provide the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman Service
- 8.22. We will send the Stage 2 response letter once the outcome of the complaint is known. We will not wait until outstanding actions are completed if they have not been completed by the time the outcome of the complaint is known.
- 8.23. The Stage 2 response letter will contain the following information:
 - The complaint stage.
 - The complaint definition.
 - The decision on the complaint.
 - The reasons for any decisions made including any relevant law or policy.
 - The details of any remedy offered to put things right with an apology,

following agreement with the resident.

- Details of any outstanding actions.
- Details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.

8.24. **Housing Ombudsman Service**

8.25. Once our complaints procedure has concluded, residents can refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman.

8.26. Residents can contact the Housing Ombudsman:

- by phone 0300 111 3000.
- by email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk.
- using an online form.
- by writing to Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

9 **Managing Unacceptable or Persistent Behaviour**

9.1. We have a separate process for dealing with complaints which meets our definition of "unreasonable complaints" and "unreasonable persistent complaints".

10 **Support Agencies**

10.1. If residents would like to receive support from an independent Support Agency such as Citizens Advice, Shelter, and Age UK we will do our best to assist residents.

11 **Confidentiality**

11.1. We will comply with the requirements of the data protection laws.

12. **Guidance for Contractors**

12.1. This policy requires any contractor providing services on our behalf to:

- Record and respond to customer complaints within the timescales detailed in our internal complaints process.
- Provide us with any information relating to a complaint upon request.
- Assist us with investigating complaints where appropriate.

13. Learning from complaints

13.1. We aim to learn from complaints and use this information to improve how we work. We will record and monitor every complaint and will regularly review the register of complaints received to identify themes and continuously improve how we handles complaints and deliver our services. We will share with residents how learning is being applied.

13.2. The Board will receive regular reports about the volumes of complaints received, at which stage they were resolved, and any trends or themes within the complaints.

13.3. In addition, we will proactively monitor the effects of its complaints procedure. Areas to be monitored will include:

- Total number of complaints received.
- Nature of complaints (e.g. repairs, anti-social behaviour, estate issues, contactor issues etc.
- Percentage of complaints resolved at the first stage of the internal process.
- Percentage of complaints resolved at the second stage of the internal process.
- Performance in responding to complaints within the policy timescales.
- Percentage of complaints escalated beyond the internal process.
- Compensation paid.
- Residents' satisfaction with the complaints handling process.
- Lessons learned.

14. **Training and Promotion**

14.1. We will publicize this policy to our staff, third party agents and tenants through:

- Providing a copy on request
- Our website; and
- Policy briefings and training.

15. **Policy Management**

15.1. The Board is responsible for ensuring this policy is kept up to date, implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

15.2. The Board is responsible for appointing a Complaints Lead Officer and Member Responsible for Complaints.

15.3. This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently when there is a change in circumstances, in work practices or the introduction of new legislation.

16. **Background Documents**

16.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the regulatory documents listed below:

- The Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Standards
- The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (2024)

Get in touch with Feldon Housing:

By phone 01608 686626

Email info@feldonhousing.co.uk

Letter – write to us at Unit 7, Brailes Industrial Estate Lower Brailes, Banbury, OX 15 5JW

In person – call the above phone number to make an appointment

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