

Complaints and Compliments Policy

Document Details

Version	1.0
Target Audience	All staff, Board Members, contractors and customers
Issuing Department	Operations
Accountable Executive/Head of Department (Name and Job Title)	Kathryn Bradbury, Head of Operations

Version Control

Version	Revision Date	Author: Name & Job Title	Change Description (Where a document has been reviewed without any amendments, insert 'N/A')
1.0	March 2017	Kate McArdell, Customer Support Team Leader	N/A

Policy Review Schedule

Revision Date	March 2017
Date approved by Accountable Executive/HoD	
Date approved by Audit and Risk Committee	
Date approved by Executive/Head of Department	
Date approved by Board	

Next Review Date	March 2020
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Complaints and Compliments Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust (the Trust) aims to deliver outstanding customer service and learn from customer feedback. The Trust aims to resolve all complaints effectively, within set targets and to the customers' satisfaction wherever possible. The Trust also welcomes compliments from customers about its services.
- 1.2. This Policy sets out the Trust's approach to offering a simple and accessible customer complaints process that ensures complaints are dealt with fairly, impartially, consistently and in a timely manner when things go wrong.

2. Definitions and Scope

- 2.1. The Trust defines a 'compliment' as feedback that a service has been provided well or that employee has been helpful.
- 2.2. The Trust defines a 'suggestion' as an idea or opinion on how a service could be improved.
- 2.3. The Trust defines a complaint as feedback received, whether justified or not, when someone is not satisfied with an action or lack of action, or about the standard of a service by the organisation or its staff or others acting on its behalf. The Trust encourages customers to give feedback when they are not satisfied with the service they have received.
 - 2.3.1. Examples include:
 - delays in responding to enquiries and requests;
 - failing to provide a service that would usually be the Trust's responsibility to provide;
 - failing to meet the service standards the Trust has promised to deliver; and/or
 - failing to follow Trust procedures.
- 2.4. The Trust cannot deal with the following through this Policy:
 - requests for specific services - for example first reports of a repair or of neighbour nuisance;
 - appeals or disputes for decisions made under other Trust policies, procedures or processes;
 - issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or tribunal, or where legal action has been taken;
 - complaints about employees that would usually be handled via HR policies; and/or

- insurance claims that would normally be covered by home contents insurance -insurance claims, including personal injury claims, will be referred to the Trust's insurers and will not be handled as a complain
- 2.5 Generally, dealing with complaints is a straightforward process, but in a minority of cases where this is not the case, the Trust reserves the right to refuse to deal with the complaint; or may seek to deal with it differently if in our view it is being pursued unreasonably or merits being handled in a different manner. Examples of these situations include:
- When customers continue to complain about issues that have already been responded to previously.
 - When customers are liaising with the Trust in an abusive or aggressive manner.
 - When customers will not work with the Trust to resolve the issue or their expectations are either unreasonable or outside what the Trust can agree.
 - Service failures that occurred over 12 months ago as we will not be able to investigate them.

3. Implementation

- 3.1. Customers can make a complaint by the following methods:
- over the telephone to our Customer Hub on telephone 0345 305 5335
 - in person to any member of staff
 - by visiting our website www.jjhousing.co.uk
 - by letter
 - by e mail
 - or by asking a relative, friend, MP, Councillor or any other representative to contact us.
- 3.2. The Trust provides equal access to our complaints service by:
- Offering a Complaints Advocacy Service
 - Accepting oral complaints
 - Supporting vulnerable customers
 - Translating and interpreting
 - Providing information in large print or audio
 - Holding meetings in places with disabled access and hearing loops
 - Paying your reasonable travel and where appropriate, carer costs

- Inviting a support worker /carer for customers who have physical or mental health issues (e.g. sight-impaired, autism)
- 3.3. If customers need help or advice in making a complaint to us or want someone to act on their behalf, there are independent sources of help such as:
- Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Freedom of Information Act
 - Local Tenants and Resident groups
 - Local Councillor or Member of Parliament
- 3.4. Complaints resolved at first point of contact - Stage 0
- 3.4.1. When a customer expresses dissatisfaction our staff will try to resolve their concerns quickly, for example:
- Re-book a missed appointment
- 3.4.2. On occasion, the matter may require an investigation rather than first point of contact resolution.
- 3.4.3. The Trust will record the complaint and any service improvements or lessons learned.
- 3.4.4. The Trust aims to resolve these matters within 5 working days.
- 3.5. Investigation – Stage 1
- 3.5.1. If the Trust is unable to resolve the complaint at Stage 0, a manager of that service area will investigate the complaint and the initial response.
- 3.5.2. The Trust aims to complete investigations and provide a response within 15 working days. If this timescale cannot be met, the investigating manager will contact the complainant to agree a revised date.
- 3.6. Review – Stage 2
- 3.6.1. If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the Trust's response, a Senior Manager who has not previously been involved will review the complainant's reasons for wishing to escalate the complaint as well as the actions taken.
- 3.6.2. If a decision is taken not to review the case, the complainant will be informed within 5 days of the reasons why and the Trust's internal complaints process will be considered closed.
- 3.6.3. Reviews will be undertaken by a panel comprising of a Board member, resident representative and Director / Senior Manager.

- 3.6.4. The Trust will provide guidance on the review and the panel will aim to provide a response within 28 working days of receiving the request for a review.
- 3.7. At all stages of the complaints process, the Trust will:
- Confirm with the complainant who is responsible for responding to the complaint
 - Speak to the complainant within 3 working days to discuss the complaint
 - Confirm the Trust's understanding of the complaint and the outcome the complainant desires
 - Advise the complainant when to expect a reply
 - Explain the Trust's decision(s)
 - Confirm when any actions will be completed
 - Respect confidentiality and advise the complainant of any enquiries we may need to make which could involve others in helping resolve your complaint.
- 3.8. Where there have been failings by the Trust, an apology will be issued and matters will be put right at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.9. In certain circumstances compensation may be offered. Please refer to the Compensation Policy for further advice.
- 3.10. The Trust will close the complaint once all the actions have been completed or after one month following the Trust's response if there is no further communication.
- 3.11. The Trust will carry out a satisfaction survey within five working days of the complaint closure and this information will be used for service improvements.
- 3.12. The complainant can involve a Member of Parliament or Councillor at any time during the complaint process.
- 3.13. Following completion of the Trust's complaints procedure, the complaint has two options:
- 3.13.1. To ask for a 'designated person' to review their case. In law, a designated person may be:
- A Member of Parliament (MP)
 - A local Councillor
 - A tenant panel recognised by the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)
- 3.13.2. To wait eight weeks after completing the internal complaint process and approach the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) to review the complaint.

- 3.14. The Trust recognises the importance of highlighting when things are done well as it is important to hear when a customer has something positive to say about the service provided so that the good practice can continue to develop and improve.
- 3.15. Compliments and comments are welcomed from all customers and the Trust will contact customers on occasion for their views on the service received.
- 3.16. The policy will be implemented with immediate effect. Managers will ensure that all employees have read the contents of the policy.
- 3.17. Training will be provided for all staff to ensure that the Policy and procedure is adhered to.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1. The monitoring of the effectiveness of this policy will be undertaken by the Executive.
- 4.2. The Trust will review this policy yearly and carry out a full review within three years in consultation with residents.

5. Linked Documents

Document Title	Author	Review Date
Compensation Policy	Peter Daly	November 2016
Equality & Diversity Policy	Alison Ramsey	December 2016
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	Kathryn Bradbury	November 2016