

## 1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Customer feedback is important to us. Alliance Homes are committed to providing great service to our customers but recognise that, on occasion, customers may complain about the service they have received. When this happens, the way we manage, resolve, and learn from our mistakes is critical to improving the way we deliver our services moving forward.
- 1.2 We encourage feedback from customers, and when things go wrong, we will listen, resolve things quickly and make sure we clearly explain the decision we have made.
- 1.3 We welcome views and opinions on how to improve our services together with praise when colleagues do things well.

## 2. POLICY DETAIL

### 2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 This policy covers all services of the Alliance Homes Group.

2.1.2 By feedback, we mean a complaint, comment or compliment defined as:

- A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction. This policy covers: an actual or perceived failure in our service offering; the way in which our people delivered the service; or something we have or haven't done. This includes services delivered by our partners or associated contractors.
- A comment is a suggestion or idea from a customer about how we could improve our services.
- A compliment is unsolicited feedback from customers about how we exceeded their expectations in delivering a service.

2.1.3 We will not consider as a complaint or any expression of dissatisfaction which relates to:

- Matters already being dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman service.
- A first-time customer enquiry. It's important we have an opportunity to provide a response or resolve our customer's issues.
- Liability issue that is subject to an insurance claim.
- Where we are advised that legal action has begun, we will continue to manage through the complaints process until confirmation of legal action has been received.
- Complaints from one resident about another. The customer should contact the Tenancy Services team for advice on neighbour disputes.
- Issues regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB). We will manage complaints of ASB through our ASB case handling process.
- The level of rent or service charge that is being charged (unless wrongly applied).
- Disagreement with a decision we have made where there is another procedure to involved in the decision, such as a dispute about service charges, successions or right to repair.

- Where the complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable manner
- A matter that was not raised within 12 months of its occurrence or has already been fully considered

2.1.4 Initial queries will always seek to be resolved by one of our teams where possible before a formal complaint is recorded.

2.1.5 Correspondence sent to Alliance Homes Senior Leadership Team or Board members will be directed to the appropriate team for action. Where the contact relates to dissatisfaction, the issue will either be investigated as a new complaint or will be included as further information in a complaint that is already being investigated.

2.1.6 A complaint made in the form of a petition on behalf of multiple customers will be treated as one complaint; interactions and correspondence will be directed to the nominated signatory.

## 2.2 Policy Aim

2.2.1 This policy sets out to resolve complaints efficiently, whilst ensuring learning from them to improve our services and prevent complaints arising in the future.

2.2.2 Our principles are to provide a quality service by:

- Putting things right within agreed timescales.
- Making it as easy as possible to provide us with feedback
- Keeping our customer informed.
- Be consistent, open, and fair in the way we deal with complaints and comments
- Following our policy and procedures.
- Fully and accurately, record details, actions, and investigations of the complaint at all stages.

Use lessons learned from the complaints to improve our service and prevent complaints.

## 2.3 Who can make a complaint?

2.3.1 Anyone who requests or receives a service from us can make a complaint under this policy. They may complain either individually or collectively with other customers similarly affected. We will also address complaints received by an advocate or someone else acting on behalf of a customer.

## 2.4 How can a complaint be made?

- 2.4.1
- Telephone
  - Letter
  - E-Mail
  - In person
  - Social Media
  - The Hive – Our online customer engagement platform

2.4.2 Where none of the above are suitable for the customer, we can make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

## 2.5 Complaint Handling Process

2.5.1 We have a formal process for handling complaints to ensure consistency of response. This is a two-stage process that refers the customer to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the matter is unresolved. A copy of this process is attached at Appendix 2. The explanatory guidance note for customers is attached at Appendix 3.

## 2.6 Learning lessons from feedback

2.6.1 We are keen to learn the lessons from our customers when they tell us they have been dissatisfied with the service that they have received from us. We will hold 'lessons learned' sessions following a complaint investigation to ensure that things change, and we handle similar situations better in the future as well as inform any changes to our procedures and policies where necessary.

## 3. **MONITORING**

3.1 We will:

- Monitor complaints, comments and compliments for each service and report findings monthly to Performance and Assurance Committee for discussion
- Ensure actions agreed as part of the lessons learned process are fully implemented
- Report quarterly to Board on feedback received

3.2 The Customer Contact Manager is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy.

3.3 Customers, colleagues, and service users may be involved in giving feedback on this policy, leading to amendments where appropriate.

3.4 This policy will be reviewed **within 12 months** of its approval date.

## 4. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

4.1 This policy is subject to a periodic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

4.2 The purpose of such an assessment is to consider the effect of the policy with regard to the recognised protected characteristics of equality and ensure that it does not unfairly impact any individual or group. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Strategy. Remedial action will be undertaken if a detrimental effect is identified.

4.3 The EIA also requires the policy author to consider whether the policy is likely to negatively impact on a person's Human Rights.

4.4 This policy and any other related Alliance Homes publications can be provided in other formats for those with visual, literacy or language difficulties.

## 5. **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

5.1 Feedback procedure flow chart and guidance notes

**6. VERSION CONTROL AND APPROVAL DATES**

<b>Version no.</b>	<b>Name and date</b>
0.1	Customer Care Policy 2020
0.2	Customer Feedback Policy 2021

<b>Approval stage</b>	<b>Date completed</b>
Equality Impact Assessment completed	July 2021
EIA reviewed by Equality & Diversity Manager	July 2021
SLT review / approval	August 2021
Board or Cttee approval	N/a
Review date	July 2022

**7. APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** – Equalities Impact Assessment

**Appendix 2** – Procedure flow chart

**Appendix 3** – Explanatory guidance note for customers