



COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Policy Aim

Black Country Housing Group (the Group) is committed to providing a high quality, accessible and responsive service to customers. One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service to our customers is by listening, learning and responding to complaints, comments and compliments.

This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments, regardless of their nature are taken seriously.

The Group believes we should listen to, and acknowledge complaints so as to alleviate any aggravation of problems, customer dissatisfaction and possible litigation. It supports the idea that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly, can be sorted out quickly and efficiently between the customer and the organisation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all of the Group's customers that use or are affected by its services and all staff and volunteers.

3. Related or Relevant Policy / Procedures or Other Documents

Complaints Procedure
Diversity Strategy
Service Standards
Resident Involvement
Improving Service Delivery

4. Definitions

A complaint is...

"An expression of dissatisfaction about the Group's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service, whether the action was taken or the service was provided by the Group itself or someone acting on our behalf".

A complaint is not...

"A request for service to be delivered such as first repair or report of neighbour nuisance, anti social behaviour, etc".

A compliment is a statement to express praise or approval of a service provided by the Group or someone acting on our behalf.

A comment is written or spoken discussion, analysis, or criticism on any part of a service delivered by the Group or someone acting on our behalf or a suggestion on how a service can be improved.

5. Responsibilities

Overseeing the implementation will be the responsibility of the Heads of departments. All staff members are responsible for the operation of this policy. Reviewing and updating this procedure is the responsibility of the Head of Business Transformation.

6. Aim of the Complaints Procedure

The Group aims to ensure its complaints procedure is properly and effectively operated and that its customers feel confident that their complaints are listened to and acted upon quickly and fairly.

Specifically it aims to ensure that:

1. customers, carers, service users and their representatives are aware of how to complain and that we provide easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints
2. a named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure
3. every complaint is acknowledged within 3 working days
4. all complaints are fully investigated and responded to in writing within 14 working days of the initial complaint made
5. complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively, with due regard to both staff and customers.
6. monitor customer satisfaction with complaints

6.1 Compliments and Comments

We will acknowledge compliments and comments within 3 working days. We will publicise what we are good at, what we changed or improved in our newsletters.

7. Confidentiality

All complaints are treated confidentially. Only officers dealing with complaints in each service area will be aware that a complaint has been received and is being dealt with. Anonymous requests will be investigated, however we will encourage that contact details be provided so that the complainant can be informed of the outcome.

8. Recording and reporting

All complaints, compliments and comments will be recorded on the Covalent Performance Management Software. Covalent gives a status report of all feedback, the root causes, and any lesson learning and how this influences service delivery, and how and when a case is closed.

Complaints will be reported twice a year to the Housing & Community Development Sub Committee. This report will highlight:

- the number of complaints
- root causes

- lesson learning
- final outcomes

The Group will report the level of complaints to 'The Customer Scrutiny Panel', made up of trained assessors who will scrutinise its performance. An independent quality check is carried out by Quality Housing Services Ltd, to gauge customer satisfaction against the excellence service criteria.

It will also include information on its performance in newsletters, publications and website and highlight any changes or improvements that have been made as a result of a complaint, compliment or comment.

9. Equality Statement

The Group aims to handle all complaints fairly and honestly regardless of who makes them. The Group treats all members of the community fairly and equally and will not show bias to any particular individual or group.

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