



Complaints Policy and Procedure

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1. Statement of intent

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Cross Keys Homes (CKH) will respond to and manage complaints in a fair and consistent way. Our aim is to put things right first time. However if a customer remains unhappy they can ask CKH to review it by making a formal complaint.

2. Aims

Complaints are treated as a genuine opportunity to resolve a dispute with a complainant and to maintain good ongoing relationships with that individual.

The aims of CKH's Complaints Policy are to ensure that:

- Complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible and within the timescales listed in this Complaints Policy.
- The Customer Complaints Policy and procedures are easily accessible, publicised and easy to use.
- Customers are kept fully informed of progress.
- Customers are treated fairly throughout the process and feel confident that their feedback is being dealt with comprehensively and professionally.
- Customer complaints are handled in a sympathetic and sensitive manner, respecting the confidentiality and privacy of our customers.

3. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees and specifically covers formal complaints. Formal complaints are defined as those expressions of dissatisfaction (EOD) that have failed to reach resolution through the relevant business area.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring customer satisfaction is a priority at all times, and services are delivered right first time.
- Ensuring they are conversant with all CKH's policies and procedures and to comply with these at all times.
- Ensuring that all customer feedback is accurately and regularly recorded on CKH's in-house management system.
- Ensuring they have read and understood the Complaints Policy and adhere to the three stage complaint process delineated below.

- Ensuring that communications with all customers are dealt with in a professional, courteous and sympathetic manner.
- Learning from complaints and embedding such learnings in their work.

4.2 Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Complaints Policy is understood and implemented consistently by employees.
- Coaching and supporting all employees in the application of the complaints process, providing advice, guidance and training, where relevant and necessary.
- Providing information in a timely manner (or at least within set timelines) in response to all requests relating to complaints.
- Learning from complaints and embedding such learnings in their work and teams.

4.3 The Chief Executive's Office is responsible for:

- Liaising with the relevant Service Managers and Directors to ensure that formal complaints are dealt with and responded to in accordance with CKH complaints procedure.
- Managing the process from start to finish.
- Producing regular reports to relevant committees and the Board as requested by the CEO.

5. General Principles

5.1 Cross Keys Homes' commitment to customers raising a complaint:

We will ensure that:

- Where possible complaints will be resolved as quickly as possible but within the published timeframes below.
- Our complaints procedure will have more than one stage for customers to escalate their complaint if there is evidence to suggest that their complaint has not been resolved to the customer's satisfaction during previous stages.
- There are no adverse effects to the customer as a result of making a complaint.
- All complaints will be dealt with in a fair and consistent way.
- We monitor and learn from customer feedback and ensure that complaints are taken into account when reviewing the service CKH provides to its customers and the performance of employees and contractors.

5.2. Who can make a complaint?

This Complaints Policy applies to feedback about any aspect of service provided by CKH and any third party contractors carrying out services on our behalf from:

- Any CKH customer, service user or advocate on their behalf.
- Neighbours of CKH customers.
- Members of the general public.

5.3 How to raise a complaint

We strongly recommend that anyone who has a complaint because their issue remains unresolved by the relevant service area contacts us at the earliest opportunity by completing our short complaint form which is available from any member of staff (*CKH Intranet*).

5.4 Unreasonable Demands:

Cross Keys Homes has a separate policy for dealing with unreasonable/challenging complainants and persistent complainants.

6. Cross Keys Homes' Three Stage Complaints Process

6.1 Stage One:

In the event that a customer remains dissatisfied with CKH's response following their expression of dissatisfaction, and there is evidence that the issues have not been resolved, the complaint will be referred to the Chief Executive's Office for escalation to stage one

The Chief Executive's Office will acknowledge the customer's complaint, in writing, within two working days.

The complaint will be fully investigated and responded to by a Service Manager who will endeavour to respond to the customer within five working days. If, for whatever reason, this timescale is unlikely to be achieved, the Service Manager will contact the customer, advising of the reason for the delay and providing the customer with an anticipated date of response.

CKH aims to resolve the majority of complaints at this stage, however if the customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of stage one of the complaint process, they will be advised to contact the Chief Executive's Office within ten working days with details as to why they remain unhappy, why they wish to escalate the complaint to stage two of CKH's complaints process and setting out the redress they are seeking.

6.2 Stage Two:

If not resolved at stage one of the complaints process, the complaint will be referred to a Service Director who will review the reason(s) for the complaint and any supporting documentation and provide a decision to the customer within ten working days as to whether or not the complaint has been upheld.

If, for whatever reason, this timescale is unlikely to be achieved, the Service Director will contact the customer, advising the reason for the delay and providing the customer with an anticipated date of response.

6.3 Stage Three:

If the customer remains dissatisfied with the decision made by the Service Director, they will be able to escalate their complaint to stage three of CKH complaints process which will be dealt with by a representative (s) of Cross Keys Homes' Residents Board.

The customer should, within ten working days of the response to the stage two, state their intention to the Chief Executive's Office to escalate their complaint to stage three of the complaints policy. They will need to set out why they remain unhappy and what redress they are seeking.

The office of the Chief Executive will provide a report to the representative (s) of the Residents' Board outlining the circumstances of the complaint and providing comprehensive details of the investigation undertaken to date.

The representative (s) of the Residents' Board will then review the complaint and the customer will be provided with a decision within ten working days. If this timescale is unlikely to be achieved, the Chief Executive's Office will contact the customer, advising the reason for the delay and providing the customer with an anticipated date of response. Customers will be invited to attend the complaint review by the Residents' Board albeit their attendance is not compulsory in order for the review to proceed.

CKH will not unreasonably deny a request for a complaint to be reviewed and escalated to any of the formal complaint stages (1 to 3) and will consider all requests for escalation. Escalation is however not warranted during the process if:

- The complainant is raising only new issues, which will be dealt with as a new expression of dissatisfaction.
- All resolution actions have been completed effectively in line with policies and procedures.
- The action taken is set out by legislation or regulation.
- Legal action is being taken against CKH.
- The complaint has previously been determined as persistent (vexatious) and is being made to intentionally cause harassment and disrupt the proper workings of CKH (refer to CKH Persistent Complaints Policy).

7. Designated Persons and the Housing Ombudsman

If the customer remains dissatisfied having followed CKH's three stage complaint process, they have a right to ask for their complaint to be considered by a designated person. A designated person may help resolve the complaint in one of two ways; they can try and resolve the complaint themselves or they may refer the complaint straight to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Designated persons usually only consider complaints which are within the remit of Housing Ombudsman Service. Designated persons include Members of Parliament and Local Councillors.

Alternatively, if the customer does not wish to refer their complaint to a designated person, they can refer the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman themselves. To do this, the customer must wait at least eight weeks from the date of their final complaint response from CKH.

Contact details for the Housing Ombudsman are below:

Housing Ombudsman Service
Exchange Tower
Harbour Exchange Square
London
E14 9GE
Tel: 0330 111 3000
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Care complaints will be dealt with according to the Care Quality Commission procedures.

8. Compensation

Following a complaint being upheld, if Cross Keys Homes' service has not met the specified standard and a customer has been inconvenienced or suffered financial loss as a result they may be entitled to a compensation payment.

The amount of the payment will depend upon:

- a) The nature of the problem.
- b) The degree of financial loss or inconvenience caused to the customer.
- c) The length of time the problem has been on-going.
- d) Previous action taken by Cross Keys Homes, including any recompense made.
- e) Any costs the customer has had to meet as a result of the problem.

Customers will be made aware that compensation payments are accepted in full and final settlement of their claim and that further compensation in relation to the same event will not be considered.

In instances where compensation is due to a customer whose rent account is in arrears or monies are owed to Cross Keys Homes the compensation sum will be deducted from the debt. This is because a breach of tenancy has occurred and CKH will not pay compensation direct to the customer without addressing any existing breach.

The authorisation of compensation payments will be at the discretion of the relevant Service Director.

9. Monitoring and review

As part of continuous improvement, the person(s) identified with direct responsibility for this policy and procedure will ensure that it is reviewed and updated, as appropriate, every 12 months. In addition the procedure will be formally reviewed every three years in order to reflect good practice and/or legislation.

If feedback is received from other parties (notably the Housing Ombudsman or the regulator) any recommendations will be considered immediately on receipt and, if appropriate, incorporated into this policy.

In order to learn from the feedback we receive we will also contact customers to find out about their experience of the process and seek to learn from this to change our process and approach where necessary.

10. Revision library control

Date	Version	Summary of changes	Section(s) changed
5.9.2019	1.1	Updated job titles	All relevant
11.11.2019	1.2	Updated job titles, stages 1 to 3 and Designated Person	All throughout, 6.1-6.3, 7
28.01.2020	1.3	Amended to reflect changes to EOD Policy	Items 3 and 5.3