



Policy Document

Complaints Policy

This, and all other policies and procedures apply to all members of the P3 group.

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

This policy sets out P3 Housing commitments to responding to complaints and seeks to ensure:

- Complainants are treated consistently and fairly with dignity, respect, and courtesy.
- Complainants are not discriminated against or victimised for making a complaint.
- Complainants are provided with assistance and advice to make a complaint.
- Effective, early, and where possible, positive resolution of complaints with an apology where appropriate.
- Complaints are thoroughly investigated within timescales.
- Compliance with regulatory and commissioning arrangements.
- Organisational learning is identified to improve services, prevent similar service failures, and correct mistakes quickly.

Complaints within the scope of this policy include those from:

- Tenants

- Someone who is affected by a decision or action taken by us.
- Someone who is affected by our services such as relatives, neighbours, agents, groups, stakeholders or professionals (eg health or social care).
- Someone acting on behalf of any tenant where there is signed consent giving permission, or, where they are acting in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

The following are not within the scope of this policy:

- Complaints from colleagues which should be referred to line manager.
- Complaints of anti-social behaviour, which will be addressed via our Anti-Social Behaviour procedure. However, this may result in a complaint if a tenant is not satisfied with actions taken in line with this procedure.

2. WHY DO WE NEED THIS POLICY?

To ensure that P3 Housing provides an effective complaint management service and high-quality response to complainants in line with our corporate values and priorities, regulatory requirements, and service standards.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all P3 Housing staff and volunteers, including those delivering services for or on behalf of P3 Housing. The policy will be published on our website, as well as being available in the form of a leaflet.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All colleagues for receiving and recording of initial complaints.
All Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All operational managers for investigation of complaints and updating of systems as required.
All Senior Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All senior managers for review of complaints and updating of systems as required and preparing the report.
Head Of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Housing for the tenant satisfaction service

Failure to comply with this policy and the regulatory requirements contained within it could result in a financial penalty or reputational damage.

5. HOW THIS POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

The current version of this policy is available on SharePoint. All new staff should read this policy on induction. This policy is reviewed annually. Staff will receive an email update when this policy is revised or reviewed and should ensure they make themselves familiar with this update.

6. POLICY STATEMENT

We aim to give our tenants the best service we can but know that sometimes things can go wrong. Our overall aim is to put things right and use the learning from all complaints to help improve our services.

We have adopted the following definition of 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'.

Complaints can be raised by anyone in section 1 of the policy about their home or the services that we or our contractors have provided. We also recognise complaints can come in many forms without the term 'complaint' being used such as from our customer surveys or you believe we have not met our service standards.

Anyone who raises a complaint or a complaint on behalf of someone else can expect us to:

- Treat individuals with dignity, respect, and courtesy, giving tenants a fair chance to clearly set out their position.
- Be objective and impartial, taking the necessary steps to address any conflicts of interest.
- Listen to individuals and not make assumptions.
- Not let the complaint affect our future relationship with individuals.
- Manage complaints in an open and transparent way, taking all evidence and information into consideration.
- Be honest and say sorry when we get things wrong and let individuals know how we plan to put things right.
- Provide a written explanation if we decide not to accept a complaint, or in an alternative format or language, as requested by the tenant based on their individual needs.
- Provide contact details for other organisations who can help at any time during the complaint or if you are unhappy with the complaint decision.

We will ensure our complaints process is accessible and we will support any individual who needs help to make a complaint. We will also provide information in alternative formats or languages and signpost to advocacy services, who may assist tenants with any attending any meetings with their landlord. We will keep a record of any reasonable

adjustments and keep them under active review. Information about the complaints policy will also be provided as part of any new tenancy, license or at the start of any care and support in a format to suit individual communication needs.

Our complaints policy has 2 stages comprising of a thorough investigation (stage 1) and a review (stage 2). If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint at stage 1, we will provide details of how to request a stage 2 review along with other organisations who can be contacted.

Definitions

Complaint - 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.

Policy details and guidance

What is a complaint?

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' (Housing Ombudsman).

Complaints can be raised by anyone in section 1 of the policy about their home or the services that we or our contractors have provided. We also recognise complaints can come in many forms without the term 'complaint' being used such as from our customer surveys.

The following issues are not classed as complaints:

- Requesting a service from us for the first time, for example reporting a repair would go through the usual repairs reporting process.
- Requests for information about our properties.
- Reporting a problem with a neighbor or a fellow tenant (if shared accommodation) which is covered by our Anti- Social Behavior Policy. Exceptions to this will be where the report includes a complaint about our response to these reports.

We will write to the complainant to confirm where we will not consider a complaint for these issues and explain our reasons.

All complaints will be considered unless:

- The issue(s) being complained about took place over 12 months before, although P3 Housing may use its discretion to accept complaints made outside of this timeframe, if there is good reason to do so. Each complaint will be reviewed on its own merits.
- The same issue from the same complainant has been investigated and closed.

- The issue is part of any legal proceedings or where the same issue is part of a case that has been referred to court.
- We have evidence that the complaint is based on false information.
- Demands are made that are persistent, unreasonable, or distressing.
- We have acted where regulatory; policy or legislative restrictions apply.

We will write to the complainant or communicate in an alternative format as agreed with the tenant based on their individual needs, to confirm where a complaint will not be considered for these issues and explain our reasons. We will keep a record of any reasonable adjustments and keep them under active review. We will also inform the complainant of their right to refer this to the Housing Ombudsman Service if they do not agree with the decision to exclude the complaint from the complaints process.

How to make a complaint and support available

Complaints can be made in a range of ways:

- In writing to our registered address below, or using our feedback app.

Eagle House
Cotmanhay Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 HU

- By telephoning us on 0115 8508190
- By email to info@p3charity.org
- In person to any P3 Housing or Charity colleague.
- To a local Member of Parliament or local authority Councillor.

We will ensure our complaints policy is accessible to all tenants via our website and we will also include information in our complaints leaflet, issued as part of any new tenancy or license.

Further advice and support is available during any stage of the complaints process from the following organisation as appropriate:

- Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

How we manage complaints

When a complaint is made, we aim to resolve and put right any issues when we are first contacted, which will be recorded as a first contact resolution. If a resolution cannot be agreed within 3 working days, the complaint will be treated formally in line with this procedure. At this stage, we will also consider the complexity of the complaint, any vulnerabilities or specific needs of the complainant. We will:

- Write to acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the receipt of the complaint. This will include our understanding of the complaint and the outcomes being sought.
- Ensure issues that cannot wait until the complaint is investigated will be dealt with alongside the complaint investigation.
- Manage expectations from the outset and be clear where the desired outcome is unreasonable or unrealistic.

There are two stages in our complaints policy:

Stage 1 is a thorough investigation by an Investigating Manager.

Stage 2 is a review by Head of Housing or a Senior Manager of the stage 1 decision upon request.

Stage 1: The Investigating Manager will complete a thorough investigation of the complaint which will be confidential, objective and impartial.

The Investigating Manager will:

- Consider what has happened, what should have happened, what lessons have been learned and what needs to change.
- Liaise with all suitable staff members who will be able to offer any input or information relevant to the complaint investigation, or offer possible remedies to resolve the complaint.
- Make contact from the outset to discuss the concerns and make further contact if more information is needed.
- Provide updates with the progress of the complaint investigation and agree the preferred way to communicate.
- Give the opportunity to outline the position and comment on any findings before a final decision is made.
- Provide a full response within 10 working days detailing the stage, the complaint definition, with an outcome, details of what action we plan to take, when they will be taken and remedies available, whether or not the complaint has been upheld, the reasons for this and how to escalate the complaint and how to get further help.

- Make contact if we cannot give a full response within 10 working days to make an agreement to extend the time by a further 10 working days and confirm this in writing. We will provide the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman if an agreement to extend cannot be reached.
- Any actions to remedy the complaint will be tracked and updates provided to the complainant until completion.

Where a complainant raises additional issues or complaints during stage 1 of the process, as long as the stage 1 response has not yet been issued, the new complaint may be included as part of the investigation process. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, or if the new issues raised are unrelated to the initial complaint, or where the inclusion of these issues would unreasonably delay the response at stage 1, a new complaint will be logged and investigated and responded to separately.

Stage 2: Complainants can request a review of the complaint if they are unhappy with the stage 1 decision and outcome. This request must be made within 10 working days of the stage 1 decision. All stage 2 reviews will be carried out by a Senior Manager, different to that of the Investigating Manager at stage 1, who will:

- Write to acknowledge the complaint review request within 5 working days of the escalation request. This will include our understanding of the reasons for the review and the outcomes being sought.
- Liaise with all suitable staff members who will be able to offer any input or information relevant to the complaint review, or offer possible remedies to resolve the complaint.
- Provide a full response within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, with an outcome, the reasons for any decisions made, details of what action we have taken or plan to take, when they will be taken and solutions offered or remedies available, whether or not the complaint has been upheld, the reasons for this and how to escalate the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the complainant remains unsatisfied.
- Make contact if we cannot give a full response within 20 working days to make an agreement to extend the time by a further 10 working days and confirm this in writing, as well as agreeing suitable intervals for keeping the complainant informed about their complaint. This decision will only be made following consideration of the complexity of the complaint, which requires further time for investigation in order to offer a full and robust response. We will provide the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman if an agreement to extend cannot be reached.

We will not unreasonably refuse a stage 2 review request, but if we do refuse, we will explain why in writing and who the complainant can contact if they do not agree with this decision. Reasons for not agreeing to a review can include:

- The request is over 20 days from the date of the complaint investigation outcome without a reasonable explanation.
- New issues have been included that were not part of the stage 1 investigation. In

this instance, any new issues will be treated separately as a new stage 1 complaint.

Tenants have the right to access the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied with the response from P3 Housing at the end of the complaints procedure.

Putting things right

At both stage 1 and stage 2 of the complaint, we can offer resolutions where the complaint is partially or fully upheld. We will consider the following factors when offering a resolution:

- The severity of any service failure or omission and the level of detriment caused as a result.
- The length of time that a situation has been ongoing.
- The frequency with which something has occurred.
- The number of different failures.
- The cumulative impact on the complainant.
- The complainant's particular circumstances or vulnerabilities.

A resolution could include, where appropriate, but is not limited to:

- Issuing a written apology
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong and detailing what actions have or will be taken to put things right
- Offering an explanation
- Reconsidering a decision that has previously been made
- Making an amendment, correction or addendum to a record.
- Changes to any policies or procedures
- Offering compensation in line with our Compensation Policy

We will manage the expectations of the complainant and will not make promises we cannot deliver or would cause unfairness to other tenants.

In some instances, a complainant may have a legal entitlement to redress. The Investigating Manager can still offer a resolution where possible following legal advice regarding any offer of resolution.

Service Requests

A service request is not a complaint, but a request from a tenant, to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. All service requests are logged, monitored and

reviewed regularly by the Head of Housing. If a tenant expresses their dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if it is on-going, a stage 1 complaint will be raised and fully investigated in line with this policy.

Training

Colleagues will receive complaints training appropriate to their role to ensure complaints are managed effectively, sensitively, and fairly.

Monitoring and reporting

Complainants will receive a satisfaction survey regarding complaint handling and asking how the process may be improved.

The Head of Housing will produce reports for the following meetings to ensure sharing of good practice, identify learning and continuous improvement:

Property Leadership Team will monitor and review complaints performance on a monthly basis.

Operational Leadership Team will receive reports on complaints on a quarterly basis.

The P3 Housing Board will review complaints performance annually. The reports will include the number of complaints received during the period, year to date figures, analysis of trends and service improvements identified.

We will review satisfaction survey results and complaints performance to identify areas for improvement with recognised customer groups on a quarterly basis.

7. LEGISLATION

- Localism Act 2011
- Regulator of Social Housing, Consumer Standards: Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 16
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023
- The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code
- Accessible Information Standard (health and social care providers)

Related policies and Procedures

- Anti-Social Behavior Procedure
- Compensation Policy

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

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