

Customer Dissatisfaction and Complaints Policy



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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that where customer experience has fallen below LGAH expected standards and the customer is dissatisfied with the quality of service given, any issues are resolved effectively and in such a way that it restores the customers trust in LGAH/its Providers and their focus on the customer.

This policy applies to all areas of the business and covers all complaints and customer dissatisfaction received from any resident, customer, and third parties making a complaint on their behalf. This policy also applies to MP and local councillor queries.

Aims

This policy requires LGAH and its partners to;

- respond swiftly to customer dissatisfaction.
- resolve dissatisfaction by providing at least the same standard of service as that which had initially been promised.
- own an action through to resolution making it easy for the customer to get the result they are looking for.

Approach

LGAH and its Providers will operate systems which allow customers to easily let us know when dissatisfaction has occurred. Where LGAH/Providers are aware of a customer expressing dissatisfaction they will, within two working hours, contact the customer to discuss the issue.

In all but the most serious cases, the person contacting the customer will be required to take the necessary steps to rectify the failure in service and ensure the customer receives the equivalent or better standard of service to that which was originally promised. This should mean in practice that if an appointment for a visit has been missed that an appointment will be offered on the same or next day where it is convenient for the customer.

Customer dissatisfaction and tackling it at the point of causation is critical to the customer experience LGAH wishes to promote. As a result, all parties working with LGAH Customers will be required to operate processes that ensure failures in service can be rectified rapidly.

It is LGAH's primary intention that the vast majority of customers who experience a service failure and dissatisfaction are managed proactively and in such a way as to not need to make a formal complaint. Fundamentally LGAH believes that through a rapid intervention and a commitment to deliver what has been promised, the majority of customers will be pleased.

MP and Local Councillor Enquiries

Anyone can make a complaint on the customers behalf, if direct authority to disclose information and discuss the complaint is given by the customer prior to investigation.

Third parties may include MP and Local Councillors who may have direct enquiries linked to their relevant Wards or they may be acting on behalf of a customer. In both circumstances LGAH and its Partners will respond to these enquiries in-line with timescales set out in this Policy.

In responding to areas of dissatisfaction or complaints, if someone has made a complaint on the customers behalf, we will respond directly to the customer and send a copy to the third party who made the complaint (with the required permissions).

Managing Formal Complaints

In certain circumstances where the impact on the customer is significant, where there's confusion about the circumstances that caused dissatisfaction or there are wider issues potentially including a breach of regulation, standard or legislation then LGAH understands a formal investigation may be required.

Where this is the case there are three critical tests that must be applied;

- Regardless of the investigation, are there any services which the customer should have received and hasn't. These must be provided immediately with the facts of the case being investigated subsequently.
- Investigations in to a complaint will be the single most important task of the individual responsible and will be completed to a professional standard as soon as possible and in agreement with the customer. In any event an investigation will never last longer than five working days.
- All formal complaint investigations and the resulting correspondence and findings will be reviewed by the Operations Director of L&G Affordable Homes in order to ensure that the speed and quality of investigation are acceptable and that the resolution provided to the customer is in keeping with this policy.

Escalation

Where a customer has expressed dissatisfaction, LGAH expects that these instances will be recorded as non formal complaints under the term dissatisfaction.

Where a customer feels it is necessary to report a formal complaint, this will be handled as a stage one complaint with the option following receipt of a response to escalate the matter. Stage one complaints will be investigated by a senior manager of the Provider and will be responded to within 5 working days.

Where an escalation occurs this will be treated as a stage two complaint and will be handled by a representative of LGAH's operations team. The case will

be reviewed and a response to the customer will be prepared by LGAH in coordination with any Provider. This will be a final response and will address the areas where the customer feels we have not resolved the complaint during the stage 1 process. A Stage 2 response will be completed within 10 working days from receipt.

External Appeals

If the customer wishes to escalate the matter beyond this point then LGAH and its Providers will direct the customer to the Housing Ombudsman and provide their contact details in the summing up of the stage two response.

The Ombudsman can be contacted at;

Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London E14 9GE

T: 0300 111 3000

D: 020 7421 3801

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The customer may also wish to raise the complaint with a 'designated person' (MP, Local Councillor or a tenant panel). In such cases, the complaint will follow the stages above, and if already at Stage 2, the customer and designated person will be informed of the next stages of the process which will be a referral to the Housing Ombudsman. In such cases, it is best practise to meet with the customer and designated person to discuss the areas of dissatisfaction to try and resolve the issue or to provide clarity for the relevant responses given.

Monitoring and Learning

Dissatisfaction will be expected to be monitored throughout the working week by LGAH and its Providers with proactive contact being made within two hours regarding any notification of dissatisfaction that is received.

Formal complaints will be reviewed weekly by LGAH with its partners and, where formal complaints have been raised, LGAH and its Provider will speak at senior manager level on a monthly basis to agree rectification measures as a result of learning from complaints reported to reduce the risk of further failures in service.

Compensation and Goodwill Gestures

LGAH will pay compensation where a customer has suffered a material loss as a result of LGAH's actions which is not covered through insurance or is the responsibility of a third party.

As part of rectifying more general service failure, LGAH will deploy a range of goodwill measures to apologise for any inconvenience caused. The emphasis in any such goodwill gesture will be to make the matter personable and where possible imaginative.

Behaviour and Values

Successfully delivering a service which is proactive in tackling dissatisfaction requires a colleague base that are engaged in the challenge and equipped with the tools to act. LGAH and its providers will work in unison to develop those behaviours such that LGAH's customers benefit from a customer experience that works effectively even when the service has failed to deliver.

Accountable Director	Shaun Holdcroft
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