

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE

The Complaints Policy outlines how City West Housing will handle dissatisfaction with our service. Its purpose is to:

- Give customers the right to complain
- Make it easy for customers to exercise that right
- Help City West Housing review what is and what is not working well within our organisation

### 2. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

Complaints can be made by customers of City West Housing, who are defined as tenants or applicants. A complaint is where a customer is dissatisfied with the service they have received from City West Housing and want us to respond or take action.

Examples of complaints include:

- Poor service
- Change or withdrawal of service
- Customer cannot contact staff member or staff member not returning calls
- Repairs not completed within time frames
- The organisation has not followed its documented policies and procedures

### 3. WHAT IS NOT A COMPLAINT?

City West Housing does not class any of the following as a complaint or service failure:

- Matters that are more appropriately dealt with through the Appeals Policy
- Matters already dealt with through the Complaints or Appeals Policies
- Matters that are the responsibility of other tribunals and courts e.g. NCAT
- Disputes between tenants unless related to the handling of the dispute
- Matters not directly related to the customer

### 4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

City West Housing is committed to providing a high quality, professional service to its customers. Outcomes and learnings from complaints are used to continuously improve service delivery.

Customers have the right to complain and will not be disadvantaged or penalised for doing so. City West Housing adopts a transparent and objective approach to receiving, investigating and responding to complaints.

### 5. WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

- A customer on their own behalf
- Someone who is responsible for the customer
- Someone who is the support person or advocate of the customer, as long as written consent has been provided

## **6. TIME LIMITS FOR COMPLAINTS**

The right to complain is limited to 21 days from the date of the original incident that led to the complaint.

## **7. PROCEDURE**

The levels and stages of complaints are listed below:

- Level 1 - Informal Process
- Level 2 - Formal Complaint
  - Stage 1 - Complaints Manager
  - Stage 2 - City West Housing's Complaints and Appeals Committee

## **8. LEVEL 1 – INFORMAL PROCESS**

Informal complaints will be directed to the appropriate Manager and usually relate to minor matters that may be easily resolved to the customers' satisfaction. Informal complaints can be both written and verbal, in person or over the phone.

The Manager will decide whether the complaint is a complaint, and not an appeal or a dispute under the Residential Tenancies Act. Where the informal complaint has been made in writing, a written response will be issued. The response will be made by the appropriate Manager. Responses to informal complaints will be made within 14 days which will include the outcome and inform the customer of their right to make a formal complaint should they be dissatisfied with the response.

## **9. LEVEL 2 – FORMAL COMPLAINT**

### **Stage 1 - Complaints Manager**

Where the matter cannot be resolved informally, then the customer should request to make a formal complaint and put their complaint in writing providing details. Once the complaint is received in writing, an acknowledgment letter will be sent within 7 days and a copy of the Complaints Policy will be included.

The complaint will be recorded by the Complaints Manager who will gather the details of the case. The Complaints Manager will decide whether the complaint is a complaint, and not an appeal or a dispute under the Residential Tenancies Act. This may include contacting the person who has put in the complaint for more information.

The complaint will be passed to City West Housing's Chief Executive Officer to investigate and issue a response. The investigation and resolution process will take no longer than 14 days, unless prior consent from the complainant has been received.

Having investigated the complaint the Chief Executive Officer will provide a response in writing outlining either:

- Complaint Upheld
- Complaint Not Upheld
- Complaint Partially Upheld

The response may include one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance about further actions
- Changes to how things are done

The letter will inform the complainant of their right to proceed to Stage 2 of the complaint process if they are dissatisfied with the response.

### **Stage 2 - City West Housing's Complaints and Appeals Committee**

If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they can refer the complaint to City West Housing's Complaints and Appeals Committee, which is made up of City West Housing Board Members.

The Complaints and Appeals Committee will review the case, which may include contacting the complainant for more information.

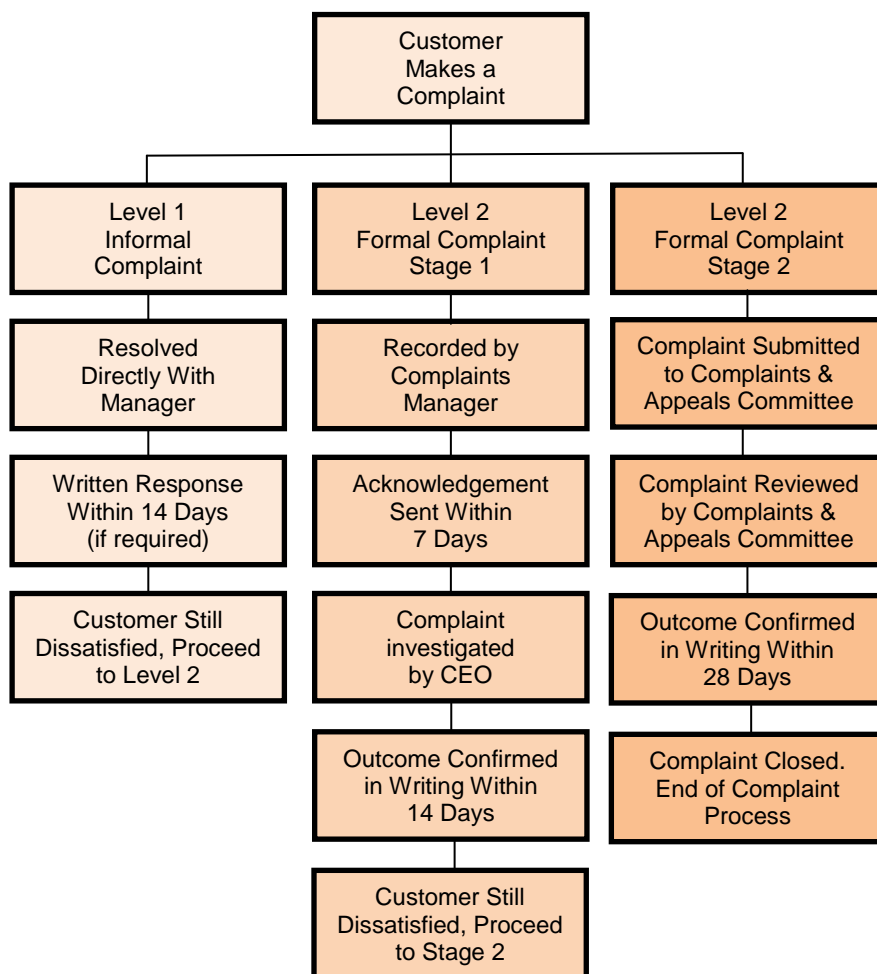
A response will be provided in writing within 28 days outlining either:

- Complaint Upheld
- Complaint Not Upheld
- Complaint Partially Upheld

The response may include one or more of the following:

- An apology
- An explanation
- An assurance about further actions
- Changes to how things are done

## 10. PROCESS DIAGRAM



| Version | Date approved | Approved by | Review Due |
|---------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| 1.1     | 02 July 2014  | CEO         | July 2015  |