## Procedure: Com

### Complaint



Approved by:

Leadership Group

Date Approved: Frequency of review: November 2022 Every 3 years

# 1. PURPOSE

The Complaints Procedure aims to support the Complaints Policy and provides further guidance and process information to assist staff with handling complaints.

Broadland Housing Association (BHA) aims for a quick resolution of all issues reported to us from our tenants and offer a transparent route for our complaint handling process whilst welcoming opportunities to learn from feedback to inform service delivery. The Complaints procedure has been drafted to meet current legislation, regulatory expectations and good practice, including the Housing Ombudsman Code published in July 2020.

The procedure is supplemented by guidance for staff and process flow-charts. The procedure will be publicised to customers in a range of sources.

Training will be provided to all staff, supported by training videos available within Broadland Business Systems (BBS)

## 2. KEY STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Board

The Board is responsible for ensuring the continued development of certain policies. When a complaint reaches Stage 2, BHA Board members will sit on the complaint panel.

#### Senior management

The Management Team are responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are followed by all concerned and promoting an anti-discriminatory environment for all to work. Senior Managers will deal with all Stage 1 complaints.

#### Staff

Employees are responsible for ensuring they are fully aware and adhere to the terms set out in the policy.

### 3. OVERVIEW

#### Making a complaint

We aim to provide good quality homes and service, but sometimes things go wrong, and mistakes are made – we are all human!

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We welcome complaints as a way to put things right, to learn and to improve. Complaints can be reported in any way convenient to the person complaining. This includes:

- Tenants Online
- Website enquiry
- Telephone call
- Face to face
- Social media
- Letter

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and to learn from them. For each stage of the complaints procedure, we have a focus on people first, then on recording and process.

#### Who can make a complaint?

We can consider complaints from:

• a person who has a lease, tenancy, licence to occupy, service agreement or other arrangement to occupy premises owned or managed by a landlord who is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme

• an ex-occupier if they had a legal relationship with the member at the time that the matter complained of arose

• an applicant for a property owned or managed by a member. This means that as well as considering complaints from tenants, we can also consider complaints from leaseholders and shared owners.

In summary, the procedure is:

#### Stage 1: Formal complaint – let's get another point of view.

This is the start of Broadland's formal process. To make sure all complaints are treated fairly and investigated correctly, a Stage 1 complaint is always allocated to a member of the Senior Management Team. If a complainant is not satisfied with Broadland's response to their informal complaint, or if they feel they want to make a formal complaint from the beginning, this is the stage that will be used. If a customer remains dissatisfied after stage 1, their complaint will be escalated to stage 2. (Appendix A)

#### Stage 2: Complaint Panel – what if you're not satisfied?

#### What happens at Stage 2:

If a complainant is not satisfied with Broadland's formal response at Stage 1, they can ask for their complaint to be escalated to Stage 2. At Stage 2, a panel made up of the Chief Executive (or other Executive Director) plus two Board members, meets to review complaint and make a decision about whether it has been dealt

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with correctly and in line with Broadland's policies. They are also able to review any compensation requests. (Appendix B)

Panel Hearings will be recorded to assist in the production of accurate minutes. These recordings will be permanently deleted after 28 days of the panel taking place.

#### Attendees:

The complainant will be given the opportunity to attend the appeal hearing and are permitted to bring a friend, family member or other person to support them. Details of who will be attending must be provided at least 7 days prior to the date of the appeal hearing. Broadland reserves the right to postpone an appeal hearing should they not be made aware of additional attendees.

The complainant is not required to attend the appeal hearing if they do not wish to, it can take place in their absence. In this instance they will be given the opportunity to provide a statement for the panel members to consider.

The appeal hearing will also be attended by the staff member who responded to the complaint at Stage 1, along with any other member of the Broadland team or external specialist it is felt would assist the panel in reaching a fair and considered outcome.

#### Information required:

Prior to a date being agreed for an appeal hearing, the complainant will be asked to provide information, this can vary with each complaint, but some examples are given in appendix B. Until all the necessary information is received by Broadland, the appeal hearing date will not be confirmed.

#### After the appeal hearing and next steps:

Following completion of the appeal hearing, the Chair will write to the complainant within 3 working days with the panel's response. Should additional time be needed for further investigation or the gathering of additional information, this will be agreed with the complainant. The complainant has 15 days from the date of the Chair's letter to inform Broadland if they wish accept the outcome of the appeal hearing. They have 12 months from the response letter to seek independent review by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Stage 2 is the final stage of Broadland's complaints process.

#### Dealing with complaints about staff, board members and contractors.

- We will not share any information with regard to individual employees.
- Human Resources and the relevant line manager will be made aware when any complaint is made about staff.
- We will inform and support if a complaint is about a member of staff.' 'Employees will be made aware of the findings/outcome of the complaint with the appropriate support in place'.

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- The person investigating the complaint will seek input from relevant staff member/s and document their responses which will form part of the complaint response.
- Any findings or recommendations relating to staff from complaint investigation will be followed up with the staff members line manager or HR or both as appropriate.
- Complaints about Board members will be assigned to the most appropriate person on the board to investigate.
- Complaints about contractors will be investigated in the same way as staff, however any findings or recommendations from complaints will be raised at the formal contract meetings. (Appendix C).

## 4. **REVIEW**

This procedure will be subject to ongoing review in the light of experience, changes in legislation and Group policy and meeting the needs of our stakeholders.

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# Appendix A – Stage 1 Process

Complainant	Staff member receiving formal complaint or a request to escalate informal complaint	Stage 1 Complaint Handler
Complainant makes request for a formal complaint to be raised or for their informal complaint to be escalated to Stage 1	Raise Stage 1 complaint on BBS including as much detail as possible regarding the complaint. Establish who will be handling complaint and notify them of new complaint. Send complainant an acknowledgement letter within 3 working days of them requesting a formal complaint is raised and include a copy of the complaints leaflet.	Make contact with complainant to discuss their complaint and obtain any additional information needed to conduct investigation. Also provide any additional information to the complainant about Broadland's complaint process. Complete investigation into circumstances surrounding the complaint. Within 10 working days of complaint being raised / escalated, provide complainant with a fu written response. If there are outstanding works note these in the response with details of expected timescales If complainant is satisfied with Stage 1 outcome complaint handler closes complaint and arrange any agreed compensation or reimbursement payment. If complainant wishes to escalate their complain to Stage 2, complaint handler to update complai on BBS and notify complaint administrator who will arrange an appeal hearing.

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# Appendix B – Stage 2 Process

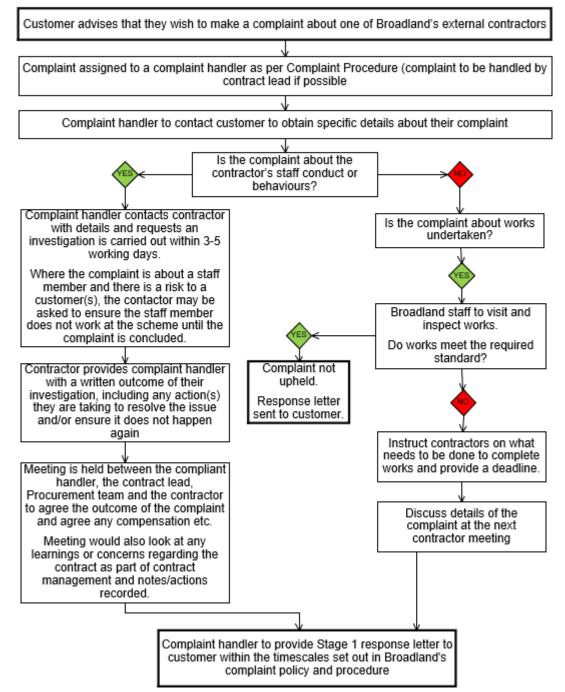
	Stage 2 Complaint Appeal Hearing		
Complaint handler at Stage 1	Complaint Administrator	Complainant	Chair and Panel Members
Notify Complaint Administrator of complaint escalation to Stage 2 and update BBS complaint record to reflect this	Contact complainant to confirm escalation to Stage 2 and provide information about process and what is needed from them before hearing date can be agreed	<ul> <li>Provide Complaint Administrator with the below information:</li> <li>Reason for escalation</li> <li>Outcome sought</li> <li>Whether you wish to attend the hearing</li> <li>Details of who will attend the</li> </ul>	
	Review information received and follow up with Complainant on any gaps. Once all information is received provide date and time for appeal hearing. ( <i>Target timeframe 20 days from receipt of all</i> <i>information</i> ) Produce Information Pack and share with Chair, Panel Members and Complainant ( <i>Target timeframe 7 days before hearing date</i> )	hearing with you • Any information you wish to be included in the information pack (this is not an exhaustive list and may vary slightly for each complaint)	
	Complaint Appeal	Hearing takes place	
	Produce minutes of the hearing (Target timeframe 2 weeks from hearing date)	Inform Complaint Administrator within 15 days of Chair's letter if they wish accept the outcome of the appeal hearing. They have 12 months from the response letter to	Chair to share outcome of appear hearing with complainant in writin within 3 working days and provid details of the Housing Ombudsma Service (should this need to be extended for furth investigation, complainant will be notified
	Update BBS to reflect complainant's decision and arrange payment of compensation if applicable	seek independent review by the Housing Ombudsman Service	

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# Appendix C – Contractor Complaints

Customer Complaint about a Broadland Contractor





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