



The Whiteley Homes Trust

Policy No: TWHT-H-05-V5

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

<b>Written By</b>	Pippa Claydon, Director of Operations
<b>Owner</b>	Director of Operations
<b>Original Policy Date</b>	June 2025
<b>Review Period</b>	3 years or earlier if required
<b>Next Review Date</b>	30 June 2028
<b>Status</b>	Current

### Review Tracker

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Changes Made</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Approved by date</b>	<b>Version</b>
June 2025	Pippa Claydon	New policy to meet HOS Complaints Handling Code	Rachel Hill Ossie Klass	6/6/25	5.0
		n/a	Full Board	24/6/25	



The Whiteley Homes Trust

## 1. Introduction

The Whiteley Homes Trust (the Trust) aims to deliver high quality services. When this does not happen, beneficiaries, tenants, customers or stakeholders affected by our services can make a complaint. This policy sets out our approach to handling complaints and has been written in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

If something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out what action we have already taken or will be taking to put things right. These actions can include:

- apologising
- acknowledging where things have gone wrong
- providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons
- taking action if there has been delay
- reconsidering or changing a decision
- reviewing policies, procedures, or practices

We will publish this complaints policy and information about the Housing Ombudsman and their Complaint Handling Code on our website and in bulletins to residents. We will also provide hard copies for residents who do not have access to electronic copies.

We will not treat you less favourably in the future if you make a complaint.

## 2. What is a complaint

The Trust uses the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint as:

*"an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents."*

## 3. What you can complain about

You can complain about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Trust, our staff, or those acting on our behalf, such as our contractors, within 12 months of the issues arising.

If you contact us with a service request we will not initially log this as a complaint. The Housing Ombudsman defines a service request as *"a request from a resident to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right"*. Examples include a missed appointment or a delay carrying out a repair. We will apologise and aim to resolve this



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outside our complaints process. If you are not happy with our response to your service request, we will raise this as a complaint.

The Trust will consider each complaint individually but will not accept complaints where:

- the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over 12 months ago
- the matter has already been considered under the complaints policy
- legal proceedings have started
- the complaint relates to a personal injury claim
- the complaint relates to the behaviour of our residents (anti-social behaviour). This will be dealt with under our Anti-Social behaviour policy

At our own discretion, the Trust may accept older complaints if there is a good reason why it had not been raised before.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will write to you and explain the reasons for this decision and how to contact the Housing Ombudsman. If the Housing Ombudsman does not agree with our decision they may tell the Trust to take on the complaint.

#### **4. How you can make a complaint**

You can make a complaint in a number of ways including:

- Letter
- Email
- Phone
- On our website
- In person

If you need help making a complaint please let us know. Any member of staff can help you make a complaint. You can authorise someone to make a complaint on your behalf (a friend, relative or representative from an external organization such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. You can also bring a representative to any meeting with us about your complaint.

#### **5. Stage 1**

We will contact you within 5 working days of receiving your complaint to acknowledge it and we will:

- Give you a reference number
- Let you know when you can expect a full response
- Ask you to clarify anything that is not clear



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The Trust aims to issue a full response to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

If we need an extension to fully investigate your complaint, we will let you know why and inform you when you can expect a response. We will also give you the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.

We will respond to all complaints by email unless we do not have a valid email address for you. Our stage 1 response will include:

- The complaint stage
- A definition of your complaint
- Our decision on the complaint
- The reasons for any decisions made
- Clear details of any remedy offered to put things right with timescales
- Details of any outstanding actions
- Details of how to contact us if you want to discuss this further
- Information on how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if you are not satisfied with the response

## **6. Stage 2**

If all or part of your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction you can ask for your complaint to be escalated to Stage 2. You must request this within 20 working days of the date of our Stage 1 response.

We will contact you within 5 working days of your request to escalate to Stage 2 to acknowledge this and to let you know when you can expect a response.

We aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. Your complaint will be reviewed by a different person who did not investigate or respond to your Stage 1 complaint and may involve several members of staff. We will contact you to ask why you are unhappy with our reply and what outcome you would like to resolve your complaint.

If we need an extension to fully investigate your complaint, we will let you know why and inform you when you can expect a response. We will also give you the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.

Our stage 2 response will include:

- The complaint stage



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- A definition of your complaint
- Our decision on the complaint
- The reasons for any decisions made
- Clear details of any remedy offered to put things right with timescales
- Details of any outstanding actions
- Details of how to contact us if you want to discuss this further
- How to contact the Housing Ombudsman if you remain dissatisfied

## **7. Housing Ombudsman Service**

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman service at any point in the process for advice on your complaint. If you remain dissatisfied after our Stage 2 response you can ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to investigate on your behalf. The Housing Ombudsman can only consider complaints if you have or had a landlord and tenant relationship with the Trust.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman through their website at [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk) or using the details below:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 1484  
Preston  
PR2 0ET

Telephone: 0300 111 3000  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk).

## **8. Learning from complaints**

We want to learn from complaints as this helps us improve our service. We use complaints to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

We will report to stakeholders on common themes and improvements we have made and publish information on our website.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

The Trust considers this policy to be fair and inclusive and we have considered our duties under the Equality Act 2010.



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