



PRIMA
GROUP

Complaints Policy

Contents

Complaints Policy and Procedure	3
Aim of the Policy	3
Policy Statement	3
Definition of a Complaint	3
Who can complain?	4
Complaints from other parties	4
Recording and monitoring of complaints	4
Complaints Process	5
Informal Complaint	5
Formal Complaint	5
Appeal	6
End of Prima Group's Complaints Procedure	6
Sources of advice and information	7
Resolution and compensation	7
Monitoring, delivery and performance	7
Document control data	8

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Aim of the Policy

Prima Group aims to provide a high quality and value for money service to its customers. We welcome complaints as a means of correcting failures in performance and improving services and levels of satisfaction with our services.

The Group will endeavour to resolve the service failure to the complainant's satisfaction where appropriate. At all stages of the complaints process the Group will endeavour to deal with the matter as quickly as possible.

The Group will ensure that its policy on customer Complaints will be published on its website and in a separate leaflet. Copies of the policy will also be available on request.

Policy Statement

Definition of a Complaint

A complaint shall occur wherever a customer expresses dissatisfaction as a result of a service failure of the Group and wishes the matter to be investigated further. A complaint can be made using any of the contact methods provided by the Group, however in order to track and monitor complaints effectively the Group's preferred method to report a complaint is via the online complaints form on the Prima Group Website www.primagroup.org.

Complaints will generally include the following, although the list is not exhaustive:

- a) failure of the Group to provide a service at the level or standard expected;
- b) the unhelpful attitude of an employee or contractor of the Group;
- c) neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for service;
- d) delay or neglect with respect to administrative processes;
- e) failure to follow the Group's agreed policies, rules or procedures;
- f) failure to consider all relevant information in coming to a decision;
- g) failure to fulfil statutory or contractual responsibilities; and
- h) malice, bias, inequity or discrimination

The following types of complaint are excluded from this procedure:

- a) requests for a service, like the first report of a repair;
- b) complaints which amount to a disagreement with the Group about;

- its decisions rather than the way the decisions have been carried out e.g. rent levels;
- c) a decision where regulatory powers are being exercised, unless the complaint relates to the way the matter has been administered;
 - d) complaints about action taken in relation to appointments, dismissals, pay, discipline, superannuation or other personnel matters;
 - e) anonymous complaints;
 - f) complaints about neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour . This is dealt with under a separate policy; Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. However, it can become a complaint when it is a failure on the part of Prima Group's service or the way in which the ASB complaint has been handled.

Who can complain?

A complaint may be made by anyone receiving or seeking a service from the Group. A complaint must, in normal circumstances, be made within three months following the provision of a service. A person may make a complaint on behalf of someone else, with their consent.

Complaints from other parties

In the event of a complaint being received from someone other than a person who has received or is seeking a service, the Group will operate a modified version of the Customer Complaints Policy and Procedure appropriate to the nature of the complaint in question. This will incorporate all of the key elements of the Customer Complaints Policy and Procedure, including the Appeals Process.

Details of such complaints will be recorded in the same way as customer complaints and complainants.

Recording and monitoring of complaints

On the working day a formal complaint is received, the relevant information relating to the complaint will be recorded centrally by the Governance Officer using a reference number specific to each complaint received.

The Governance Officer will ensure all relevant material such as correspondence relating to the complaint is kept centrally and those submitted online will be stored in Docuware. Any officer who has previously dealt with the complaint should pass any paper work to the Governance Officer

All correspondence relating to the complaint will be given the same reference number as assigned at the beginning of the process.

It is the responsibility of any staff members dealing with a complaint to ensure that the Governance Officer is kept up to date with the appropriate information.

Complaints Process

In the event of a customer being dissatisfied with the service provided the following course of action is applicable.

Informal Complaint

- a) When the customer first contacts the relevant member of staff they should endeavour to resolve the problem i.e. this will usually be their Housing Officer or one of the Housing Assistants.
- b) The receiving officer should explain to the customer that the complaint will be dealt with informally first, but if they are not satisfied they can make a formal complaint verbally there and then. The receiving officer will try their best to resolve the complaint before escalating it to the formal complaint stage.

Formal Complaint

If the customer is not satisfied with the response they receive from the first point of call i.e. their Housing Officer or Housing Assistants they should then make a request to formalise the complaint.

- a) A complaint form is available for completion on the website www.primagroup.org – this is the preferred method of contact (however we can still accept complaints by phone, email and over the telephone). Front line staff who receive complaints over the telephone will complete the online form on behalf of the customer and therefore should make every effort to ensure that details of the complaint are correctly recorded.
- b) The Governance Officer should ensure the complaint is recorded on the appropriate systems and acknowledgement is sent within two working days of receipt.
- c) The Governance Officer will then refer the complaint to the appropriate department where it will be fully investigated by a senior member of staff who has not been directly involved in the complaint.
- d) A response to the complainant should be sent within 10 working days of receiving the complaint. However, this may be varied either by mutual agreement, or if required due to key members of staff being unavailable. The complainant should be made aware if the timeline needs to be extended.

- e) Every complainant has the right to a final appeal to a panel. They should be told of this right when they are given the response to their complaint. They should also be encouraged to state the reasons for their appeal and the outcome they are seeking. The complainant has six weeks from the closing date of their Stage one to escalate it to the Appeal.

Appeal

- a) If the complainant is unhappy with the response received to their complaint they can appeal to a Panel. The panel will consist of one member of EMT with a tenant representative or Board Member. The complainant will also be offered the opportunity of a personal hearing with the Panel, in order that they can state their case in person. However, refusal to accept the same will not prejudice their case.
- b) An acknowledgement should be sent within two working days giving the complainant the option of a personal hearing. The Association should aim to hold the personal hearing at a time that is convenient for the complainant. On receiving a request for a personal hearing The Group should send a reply within five working days of the proposed hearing, or meeting of the panel, to give the complainant reasonable notice. The Appeals Process will be dealt with without unreasonable delay and the Group will aim to have given a full response within 20 working days of the hearing. However, this may be varied either by mutual agreement, or if required due to key members of the panel being unavailable.
- c) The complainant should be told that Prima group's complaints procedure is now complete.

End of Prima Group's Complaints Procedure

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the result of their appeal or the way in which it is being handled, the complainant can wait eight weeks and contact the Ombudsman directly.

OR

Refer the matter to a designated person. The designated person will choose to resolve it or pass it to the Ombudsman straight away. Prima Group does not currently have a designated person recognised and registered to the Ombudsman. The complainant should be given the following address to contact the Ombudsman:

Housing Ombudsman Service

81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Telephone : 0300 111 3000

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Ombudsman will seek to resolve complaints once the Groups' own procedures have been exhausted. This service is free for the complainant.

Vexatious Complaints

We recognise that on occasion complaints made can be vexatious. The Group will not tolerate continuous vexatious complaints and will take appropriate action through the enforcement of the tenancy.

Sources of advice and information

Multi-agency complaints involving the police or social services are difficult to resolve. Ensure that the complainant is made aware of the limitations of Prima group's power as a landlord and sign post accordingly and support the tenant throughout the process.

Resolution and compensation

Resolution of a complaint may involve one of the following:

- An apology;
- A change in policy;
- A goodwill gesture, e.g. flowers, gift voucher;
- A compensation payment.

In any case where clear financial loss has been suffered by a complainant as a result of the subject of their complaint, Prima Group will consider giving financial compensation at the Chief Executive's discretion, or in line with any operational compensation policy.

Where payments of compensation have been paid by the organisation these will be logged formally to ensure a clear audit trail is recorded to track expenditure and any failures in service.

Monitoring, delivery and performance

Reporting

Details of all complaints should be broken down on a monthly basis into departments and categories along with any lessons learnt. These reports will go to the Executive Team on a monthly basis and to the Customer Service & Performance Committee annually.

The reports will be published in the tenants' newsletter and on the website.

Satisfaction surveys should be carried out within two weeks of the complaint being closed. The outcomes should be entered in Covalent and monitored and reported to the Customer Service & Performance Committee.

Any lessons learnt and any changes needed in policies and procedures.

Document control data

Policy Reference Number:	
Version:	
Author:	
Responsibility for the Strategy:	Group Director of Resources
Date to relevant Resident Scrutiny Group:	29/11/2017
Date approved by EMT:	29/11/2017
Date approved by CS&P Committee	06/12/2017
Date approved by PHA Board:	N/A
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	
Date due for review:	November 2020
To be reviewed by:	
Consultation Panel:	
Date review completed:	