

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

## **COMPLAINTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE**

### **INDEX**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	2
Purpose of Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments procedure	2
Who is the Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments procedure for.	2
Suggestions and Compliments	3
Complaints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Section 1. Informal procedure</li> <li>◆ Section 2. Formal procedure</li> <li>◆ Section 3. Documentation and record keeping: confidentiality</li> <li>◆ Section 4. Best practice</li> </ul>	3 4 10 12
Checklists /Standard Forms	15
Service Users Summary to Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments procedure	30

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

## **COMPLAINTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE**

### **Introduction**

Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments are important sources of information about service user satisfaction. The Association welcomes and encourages such feedback to continuously improve the quality of services provided.

### **Purpose of Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure**

This procedure is intended to provide a means for:

- Resolving situations where service users are dissatisfied with our services, our staff or agents, or our procedures (**complaints**).
- Looking at aspects of the services and identifying any necessary action, which may involve providing information to service users or making changes to services/procedures (**suggestions**).
- Using positive feedback from service users to inform the development of services and procedures (**compliments**).

### **Who is the Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure for?**

- The Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure relates to all services within PRHA.
- The procedure is for use by anyone receiving a service from the Association. This includes **tenants, licencees, leaseholders**, applicants, and people acting on behalf of service users/ applicants.
- For the purposes of the procedure, the term 'service users' is used to apply to all of these groups.
- A copy of the 'Service users' summary to Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure' will be issued to all applicants and will be part of the information pack given to all new service users.
- Staff must be made aware that whenever a service user expresses dissatisfaction with a service they must be advised of their right to make a complaint. Whenever staff are not sure if an issue should be treated as a complaint they must seek advice from their line manager.

### **What areas will this procedure cover?**

- The procedure will accept complaints, suggestions and compliments that are related to the services provided by PRHA.
- **This procedure will accept complaints from groups of tenants. The response will be sent to all members of the group who are named in the complaint.**

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

## What areas will this procedure not cover?

### This procedure does not cover any

- Complaints, suggestions and compliments received from a service user about another service user. (These will need to be addressed under the ASB procedure).
- Complaints, suggestion, compliments made by staff employed by PRHA. (Please refer to staff handbook)

### What happens if the full complaints procedure has been completed but the complainant does not feel their complaint has been fully resolved?

- **If the complainant is a service user they will be advised that they can refer their complaint to their local Councillor, local MP or a recognised tenants' panel who will try to resolve their complaint locally. Alternatively the complainant can wait for 8 weeks (from the date of their 3<sup>rd</sup> stage decision letter) and then go directly to the independent Housing Ombudsman service.**

**Note: PRHA's Service users Advisory Panel has decided as at May 2013 that they do not wish to set up a Tenants Panel.**

## Suggestions and Compliments

### 1. Acknowledgment letter.

On receipt of a compliment/ suggestion a letter of acknowledgement (SF/CSC-1) should be sent to the service user within 5 working days. This letter should thank them for their positive comments and inform them that their comments have been referred to the relevant office/department/person.

## Complaints

For ease, this area is divided into four main sections:

- Section 1 addresses the Informal procedure
- Section 2 addresses the Formal procedure
- Section 3 addresses 'Documentation and record keeping: Confidentiality'
- Section 4 outlines Best practice.

In addition to these sections there are a further two sub sections:

- Standard letters and checklists
- Service user friendly version of the procedure.

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

## **1. Informal procedure.**

### **1. Informal Resolution**

- All service users have the choice of whether to make a complaint, formally or informally.

In all cases where feedback is resolved informally, a log of the complaint should be placed on the service's central 'Complaints book'. This log book should record the date the complaint has been received/resolved and the name of the staff addressing the complaint. The actual details of the complaint with its resolution should be entered on the service users file, complaints section.

- The formal procedure should be followed where it is not possible to respond to and resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the service user, or if it has implications for others within the organisation.
- If a service user chooses to formalise their informal complaint, the formal Complaints Procedure should be followed. The service user will need to formalise their complaint within 4 weeks of receiving the informal outcome.
- If the complaint is about a staff member, this should be passed to the staff member's line manager

## **2. Formal Procedure.**

There are three stages to the internal complaints section of this procedure.

### **Stage one**

#### *1. Acknowledgement letter.*

- On receipt of a complaint, the Project Manager should send a letter (SF/CSC-2) to the service user acknowledging receipt within 5 working days, and informing them who is dealing with their complaint, how they can be contacted, and when they will receive a written response.
- A full response should be sent to the service user within a further 20 working days (15 working days to conduct investigation and a further 5 working days to send an outcome).
- All first stage complaints must be registered on the database within one working day of receipt. All correspondence relating to the complaint, notes of meetings & any supporting information must then be logged onto the system when it is issued. Compliance with timescales will be centrally monitored.

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

- If a complaint is about the actual Project Manager that the complaint would normally be sent to under stage one, then the complaint should proceed to stage 2. (This will allow the Project Managers line manager to investigate the complaint, thus avoiding any conflict of interest).
- If the complaint is about services or procedures within the Project Manager's area, they will be responsible for investigating it, and for keeping the service user informed of progress.
- If the complaint is about a central department or another service, the Project Manager receiving the complaint is responsible for passing the complaint/ records to the relevant department/ manager, and informing the service user of who is dealing with the complaint. This should be done within 5 days of receiving the complaint. It is now the responsibility of the relevant department/ manager to investigate the complaint and keep the service user informed of progress within the timescale of the policy. (Following receipt of complaint, 15 days to investigate and 5 days to send an outcome).

## 2. Investigation

- Any investigation, or the seeking of additional information which is required in order to resolve the complaint should be carried out within 10 working days. This is irrespective of the complaint needing to be passed to a manager of another service. If further time is required; the service user should be contacted during the 10 working day period (using SF/CSC-3) and an explanation given for the continuing delay. A further deadline must be set and adhered to.

## 3. Outcome

- Once the required information is collected and a decision made, a letter detailing the outcome of the investigation (SF/CSC-4) and any action taken as a result should be sent to the service user within a further 5 working days following the closure of the investigation.
- The outcome should take into account constraints around confidentiality and should not disclose personal information/ action being taken against staff/ other service users.
- **The outcome letter must inform the service user of their right to take their complaint to stage 2 if they are not happy with the outcome of stage 1.**

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

**In summary**, if there are no extensions in deadlines, the whole first stage process from acknowledgement letter through to investigating the complaint and sending the outcomes letter should take no longer than 20 working days.

- 5 days to acknowledge complaint.
- 15 days from receipt of complaint to investigate the complaint
- 5 days from close of investigation to send an outcome of the investigation.

## Stage Two

If the service user is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1 of the procedure, or feels that the procedure has not been followed, the next stage is to send the complaint to the Performance & Monitoring Officer who will log it on the system send an acknowledgement letter & pass it within one working day to the Assistant Director/ Head of Department.

Stage 2 can be made verbally or in writing. **If it is made verbally a staff member will write down the complaint immediately and provide a copy to the complainant to ensure this has been understood fully. Wherever possible the service user should be asked to confirm that this is correct & sign the complaint. The stage 2 complaint will be active from the date at which the verbal complaint is received.**

## Mediation

At this stage of the complaints procedure you should consider mediation. In some circumstances the use of mediation may be identified as a useful means of trying to resolve a complaint. In this case, agreement from all parties concerned must be gained before bringing in a mediator.

### 1. Who to send the complaint to.

The complaint should always be addressed to the Performance & Monitoring officer at Head office.

- If the complaint is about the actual Assistant Director/ Head of Department then the complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will allocate an appropriate staff member to carry out the investigation.

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

- If the complaint is not about the relevant Assistant Director/ Head of Department then the complaint will be passed to them for a response.

## 2. Acknowledgment letter.

- On receipt of a stage 2 complaint the Performance & monitoring Officer will within 5 working days, send a letter (SF/CSC-5) to the service user acknowledging receipt, and informing them who is dealing with their stage 2 complaint, how they can be contacted and when they will receive a written response.
- On receipt of the stage 2 the complaint will be passed to the relevant Assistant Director/ Head of Department/ appropriate allocated person who will then be responsible for ensuring one of the following processes is implemented.

### Complaint- if staff related.

- Following receipt of a complaint it may become apparent at this stage that the complaint involves possible staff misconduct.
- If stage 2 is staff associated, the complaint will need to be investigated alongside other internal processes (See also 'Disciplinary Procedure'). The issues raised in the complaint will continue to be investigated & reported back to the service user to normal procedural timescales although disciplinary outcomes may not be divulged.

### Complaint – if non staff related.

- **If stage 2 is about services &/or procedures within the Assistant Director or Head of Department's area**, they will be responsible for investigating the complaint and for keeping the service user informed of progress. Where complaints may be cross departmental responsibility for managing the complaint will be taken on by one of the relevant Assistant Director's/Heads of department and other departments will support them in their investigation.

The investigation and or the seeking of additional information which is required in order to investigate stage 2 should be conducted within deadline. See *stage 2 summary for deadlines*.

If further time is required; the service user should be contacted during the 10 working day period (using SF/CSC-6) and an explanation given for the continuing delay. A further deadline must be set and adhered to.

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

1. Outcome.

Once the required information is collected and a decision made, a letter detailing the outcome of the investigation and any action taken as a result should be sent to the service user within deadline. (SF/CSC-7). See stage 2 summary for deadlines. (The outcome should take into account constraints around confidentiality and should not disclose personal information/ action being taken against staff/ other service users).

**The outcomes letter must inform the service user of their right to appeal against the decision according to Stage 3 of the procedure.**

- Any information/records regarding the investigation, and copies of any letters should be filed on the database & on the department's central Complaints file. (This file should be maintained by the Assistant Director/ Head of Department).

**Stage 2- In summary**, if there are no extensions in deadlines, the whole process from acknowledgement letter through to investigating the appeal and sending the outcomes letter should take no longer than 20 working days.

- 5 days to acknowledge complaints appeal.
- 15 days from the receipt of the complaint to conduct an investigation
- 5 days from close of investigation to send an outcome letter.

**Possible extension**

If an extension on the deadline is required at the investigation stage, this must generally not exceed an additional 10 working days. Where an extension is made, the service user must be informed, in writing within the original 10 day investigation period. This new deadline must be adhered to.

Exceptions that may cause this 10 day extension to be extended may include where the complaint can't be resolved without disciplinary action, or where staff who play a vital role in the investigation process are on leave. *This list is not exhaustive.*

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

### Stage Three- Appeals process

If the service user is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation at Stage 2 or feels that the procedure has not been followed, the next stage is stage 3 - The appeal. Stage 3 complaints are heard by the Management Board. The panel will be made up of three Board members, and where possible should include a Board member who is also a current or former service user.

#### 1. Who to send the complaint to.

- If a complaint is about the Chief Executive (CE) then the complaint should be sent to the Chair, c/o PRHA head office.
- If a complaint is not about the CE then the complaint should be sent to the Performance & monitoring Officer at PRHA head office who will pass it to the CE for action.
- The member of staff responsible for the complaint at Stage 2 is responsible for sending all relevant forms and paperwork to the Chair/ CEO within deadline. (The deadline will be dictated by the person investigating stage 3, but would generally be within the initial 5 working days of them receiving the stage 3 complaint).

#### 2. Acknowledgement letter.

- On receipt of an appeal, the CEO/ Chair will send a letter to the service user acknowledging receipt within 5 working days. (SF/CSC-8). The letter will inform them that an Appeals Panel is being convened to deal with their appeal, who to contact for further information, and when they will receive a written response.

#### 3. Investigation.

- The Appeals Panel will seek any additional information required, and conduct their investigation within timescale. See *stage 3 summary*. Page 9.

If further time is required; the service user should be contacted during the 10 working day period (using SF/CSC-9)) and an explanation given for the continuing delay. A further deadline must be set and adhered to

- An appeals meeting will be held to hear all evidence. The complainant will be invited to the panel to present their case. (See *Stage 3 summary for timescale* & **attached guidelines for panel hearings**).

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

#### 4. Outcome.

- Once the investigation is completed and a decision made, a letter detailing the outcome of the investigation and any action taken as a result should be sent to the service user within a further 15 working days. (SF/CSC-10).
- The outcome should take into account constraints around confidentiality and should not disclose personal information/ action being taken against staff.
- The decision of the 'Appeals Panel' will be final and no further right of appeal will exist internally. Similarly, closely related complaints from the same individual about the same issue should not be reconsidered.

#### **The outcome letter should include the following information:**

- **If the complainant is a service user the outcome letter should include the advice that they can refer their complaint to their local Councillor, local MP or a recognised tenants' panel who will try to resolve their complaint locally. Alternatively the complainant can wait for 8 weeks (from the date of their 3<sup>rd</sup> stage decision letter) and then go directly to the independent Housing Ombudsman service.**

**If the complaint is support related the letter will also include information as to how to complain direct to the Local Authority Supporting People Lead Officer.**

**Stage 3-In summary**, if there are no extensions in deadlines, the whole process from acknowledgement letter through to investigating the appeal and sending the outcomes letter should take no longer than 40 working days.

- 5 days to acknowledge the appeal.
- 25 days from receipt of Stage 3 appeal letter, to seek any additional information required, to investigate the complaint and hold the 'Appeals Panel'
- 15 days from close of investigation to send an outcome of the investigation.

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

**Possible extensions.**

In the event of the need for further investigations following the Appeal meeting, this will be completed within a further 10 working days. Within these 10 working days a 'Final Appeals' meeting must be held and all new information heard. The maximum length of stage 3 is 55 working days.

**Procedure for appeal panel hearings**

The appeal panel will appoint a chair in advance of the meeting who will liaise with staff to ensure that the required information and staff members are present. Where possible a member of the senior management team (not from the department which is the subject of the complaint) should attend the panel to take minutes and to provide advice to the panel (a separate minute taker may attend if the panel so wishes) **and the officer responsible for the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage response.**

The panel should read all correspondence in advance of the meeting.

The panel hearing will commence with discussion before the complainant comes into the meeting. They will decide whether they want to meet with the complainant separately to the investigating officer, or not, according to the circumstances.

The complainant will be invited to attend the hearing and will have an opportunity to explain the reason behind their complaint and why they are not happy with the second stage response. If they choose not to attend, the meeting will proceed in their absence.

Members of panel may ask questions as they wish of the complainant. They will also be able to ask questions of the staff member who investigated at the second stage.

The complainant & the investigating officer will then leave so that the panel can discuss their conclusions.

The complainant & investigating officer may then rejoin the panel for feedback and further discussion.

The chair will liaise with the relevant SMT member to ensure that the complainant receives a letter explaining the panel's findings.

**External procedures**

If the service user remains dissatisfied with the results of the internal process and wishes to complain to the IHOS/ Supporting People team or Landlord, (Where PRHA is the managing agent), PRHA staff should advise the service user on how they could proceed

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

It is essential that the service user has exhausted the internal complaints procedure first.

### 3. Documentation and record keeping/ Confidentiality

#### 3.1 Confidentiality-

##### Complaints number

All formal complaints will be issued with a complaints number; this allows PRHA to track complaints at Board level without being able to identify the individual who has made the complaint.

The complaint number will be recorded on the formal complaint log, and will be written at the top of each correspondence sent to a service user.

When staff receive a formal complaint you will need to access the database and record the complaint –the complaint will be allocated a reference number. All correspondences relating to the same complaint must have the same complaint number. Each individual complaint must have its' own complaint number, no duplications

#### 3.2. Record keeping/ documentation

##### Complaints records

All services must store all complaints on the database. Where a complaint is an informal or stage one formal complaint this should be done by the project manager or a trained delegated person.

- All stage 2 complaints will be logged by the Performance & monitoring officer who will maintain a central log of all second stage complaints.

As well as ensuring that complaints timescales are complied with, the complaints records form part of PRHA's monitoring and help PRHA to identify any trends that may need addressing at corporate level. The information also feeds into PRHA's 'Annual Diversity Report', and is a requirement by external bodies, e.g. Supporting People.

##### Saving standard letters on the database

All correspondence- (standard letters sent in response to a formal complaint should be saved on the database).

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

### Service user's files

All service users' individual folders, maintained by staff, must have a separate Complaints section. This section must be used to record details of all informal and formal complaints and to file copies of letters relating to complaints

Where information is of a confidential nature i.e. information being recorded in the acknowledgment letter regarding accusations made against a member of staff; the person responsible for writing the letter must take into account, whether a copy of the letter should be stored on the service user's file or alternative arrangements made. Where alternative arrangements are made this must be recorded on the service user's file - (to provide a paper trail).

### Checklists.

When a formal or informal complaint has been received the relevant checklist must be completed and placed on the service users file, attached to other related correspondences.

Checklist Ch-1 (Informal resolution), or Checklist Ch-2 (Formal resolution).

## 4. Best Practice

### 4.1 Complaints advocates.

Where a service user requires support to make a complaint, it is the responsibility of the member of staff overseeing that particular stage to support the service user to find a 'Complaints advocate'. The Complaints advocates may be an independent person outside of the association or a service user within the PRHA, (To be a service user 'Complaints advocate', the service user will have received appropriate training).

### 4.2. Timescales

The timescales outlined in the Procedure are deadlines, not targets, and where possible a quicker response should be given.

It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances it may not be possible to adhere to the timescales set out above. In this event, written notification **must** be sent to the service user explaining the reason for the delay, and a revised date for completion of action.

Where tenants fail to respond to provide sufficient information to investigate a complaint or become uncontactable (all possible means

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

of contact must be tried), the responsible officer must write to the tenant within the timescales and advise that the complaint is being closed through lack of information. If the tenant then responds the complaint will be reopened but will be treated as a new complaint in respect of timescales.

#### **4.3. Encouraging service users to use the Complaints procedure.**

All service users should be made aware of the Complaints procedure, and should be given a copy of the Complaints leaflet. In addition, service users should be regularly reminded and encouraged to use the procedure, and where possible, project meetings should be used to discuss the Complaint procedure.

#### **4.4. Positive attitudes towards complaints**

PRHA views complaints as a positive opportunity to learn more about what service users want from a service and how an organisation can improve its services.

PRHA's approach to complaints is therefore to encourage service users to complain if they are not happy with an aspect of the service, and to welcome this feedback.

Any staff member investigating a complaint should investigate the matter by taking a problem-solving approach and not by being defensive. The primary purpose is to find a satisfactory resolution and to learn and take positive action in relation to the association's policies and practices.

#### **4.5. Mediation**

In some circumstances the use of mediation may be identified as a useful means of trying to resolve a complaint. In this case, agreement from all parties concerned must be gained before bringing in a mediator.

#### **4.6. Monitoring**

##### **a) Complaints form /Complaints leaflet**

This is the form/ leaflet which, the service user completes to register a complaint. In the event of a service user registering a complaint verbally, the staff member receiving the complaint should complete the 'Complaints form' with the service user on their behalf.

##### **b) Supervision**

Complaints outcomes and compliance with procedure should be monitored through supervisions.

Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018	Replaces : version 5
Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018	File No. C 16

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

#### **4.7. Feedback**

The Complaints Procedure should serve all service users, and not just those who formally register a complaint. Where policies, practices or procedures are changed as a result of a complaint, all service users who may be affected by this should be informed; – not just those who have used the Complaints Procedure.

In addition, in order to demonstrate the benefits of using the Complaints Procedure to service users generally, regular reports/feedback should be compiled and publicised to service users, either via service users' newsletters, or a separate report to service users. This is the responsibility of Project managers, Heads of department & Assistant Directors.

#### **4.8 Complaints from external bodies.**

##### **A) Complaints /member enquiries from democratically elected community representatives (Councillors & MPs): “Member enquiries”**

Note: performance in relation to member enquiries is a corporate priority with a target of 100% compliance.

All member enquiries are directed through the Chief Executive & passed to the relevant manager on the same day for a draft response. They are then logged by the Performance & Monitoring officer - also on the same day- & an acknowledgment sent to member services.

The draft response must be passed to the Chief Executive (copied to the performance & monitoring officer) within 5 working days. Any related requests for information must be dealt with urgently.

Responses must be in the form of a letter to the relevant Member and sent care of Members Support and should be sent within 10 working days. Where a full response cannot be provided in the first 10 days the Chief Executive may agree an extension and will send an interim response within the original 10 working days response timescale. The actual full response must follow no more than 10 working days afterwards.

Where a member enquiry is received in relation to a service user/tenant but has not yet been raised through the complaints procedure, this should be considered as a stage one formal complaint & follow the appropriate process. This must run in parallel to the Member Enquiry.

If the Member's enquiry is already going through PRHA's complaints procedure, the response will inform the Member that the complaint or enquiry is already under investigation, what stage it has reached, who is dealing with it and when a full response can be expected and that the

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

Member will be copied into this response. Any additional points made by the Member on the complainant's behalf should also receive consideration.

If the Member or their constituent remains dissatisfied after receiving a full response, he/she should contact the direct line manager of the respondent who will determine how best to progress the matter further.

All responses to Members enquiries should therefore include a standard paragraph referring to the respondent's line manager should they remain dissatisfied with the response they have received.

Members' enquiries reflect the specific case work of the Member involved and copies of the responses must not be copied to other Members. The letter to the member should be copied to the relevant tenant /service user unless the Chief executive has specifically agreed otherwise.

Copies of all member enquiries will be retained by the Performance & monitoring officer. Annual reviews of member enquiries will be conducted as part of the overall complaints review.

**B) Complaints from neighbours.**

All services will have neighbourhood management strategies which should be available to neighbours and provide details of how to make a complaint if necessary.

These will be dealt with by the relevant service manager. They should be acknowledged within **2** working days & responded to within 10 working days. Details of the complaint will be immediately forwarded to the relevant line manager who will oversee the response to the complaint with a view to ensuring that good community relations are maintained & where necessary liaison with other statutory authorities . Where local councillors /MPs become involved this should be reported immediately to a member of the senior management team who will have responsibility for on-going liaison with them.

All complaints should be logged on the database (directly by services or via the performance & monitoring officer where these relate to corporate services).

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

### **C) Complaints from other external bodies/individuals**

These will be referred immediately to the relevant senior management team member who will take responsibility for overseeing an appropriate response. They should be acknowledged in writing within **2** working days & responded to in writing within 10 working days. Where appropriate, meetings will be held with the complainant as part of the investigation. Where the complaint is on behalf of a tenant/service user this should be treated as a formal complaint at the appropriate stage of the process and dealt with accordingly. The tenant/service user's permission must be obtained to divulge any information directly to any third party.

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Checklist**

- Checklist Ch-1 Informal resolution
- Checklist Ch-2 formal resolution

### **Standard Forms.**

- SF/CSC-1 Letter of Acknowledgement of Suggestion/Compliment.
- SF/CSC-2 Letter of Acknowledgement Complaints Stage one
- SF/CSC-3 Delay in response Stage one
- SF/CSC-4 Outcome of investigation Stage one
- SF/CSC-5 Letter of Acknowledgement Stage two.
- SF/CSC-6 Delay in response Stage two
- SF/CSC-7 Outcome of investigation Stage two.
- SF/CSC-8 Letter of Acknowledgement Stage three
- SF/CSC-9 Delay in response Stage three
- SF/CSC-10 Outcome of Stage three.
- SF/CSC-11 Formal Complaints log

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

**Checklist Ch-1. Complaints Procedure. Informal Resolution**

		Date	Done (initial)
1.	Staff member logs complaint in Complaints Log book		
2.	Investigation carried out and appropriate action taken		
3.	Complaint Log book completed and signed by service user and staff member.		
4.	File this check list on Service users file - Complaints section		
5.	Line manager informed of complaint.		
Signed		Date	

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

**Checklist Ch-2. Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure  
Formal Resolution**

<b>Stage 1</b>		Date	Done (initial)
1.	Formal complaint completed by service user or by staff member on behalf of service user and passed to service manager		
2.	Project Managers send acknowledgment letter. Within 5 working days. (Log on database		
3.	Project Manager carries out investigation. Within 10 working days (15 days from receipt of Complaint)		
4.	Project Manager, if applicable sends out letter re extending deadline.		
5.	Project Manager sends outcomes letter. Within a further 5 working days. And updates database		
6.	Where proceeding to stage 2, a copy of this form and all documents sent to Assistant Director to process Stage 2		
Signed		Date	

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

<b>Stage 2</b>	Date	Done (initial)
1. Appeals letter received by the Performance & Monitoring Officer , logged on database & passed to relevant Assistant Director/ Head of Department within 1 working day & acknowledged within 5 working days		
2. Assistant Director/ Head of Department carry out investigation. Within 10 working days. (15 working days from receipt of complaint)		
3. Assistant Director/ Head of Department, if applicable sends out deadline extension letter,		
4. Assistant Director/ Head of Department sends outcomes letter. Within a further 5 working days and updates Complaints log on Database		
5. Where proceeding to stage 3, a copy of this form and all documents sent to CEO to process Stage 3		
<b>Signed</b>	Date	

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Done (initial)</b>
1. Appeals letter received by Performance & Monitoring Officer , logged on database & passed to Chief Executive within one working day & acknowledgment letter sent within 5 working days		
2. Chief Executive passes appeals letter and relevant documents/ letters to Appeals Panel. (The Board)		
3. Appeals Panel carries out investigation and holds appeals meeting within 25 working days		
4. If applicable the Appeals Panel will conduct further investigations and hold a final appeals meeting. Within 10 working days		
5. Chief Executive sends outcomes letter to service user within 15 working days. Complaint updated on database.		
<b>Signed</b>	<b>Date</b>	

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1 Oct 2018</b>	<b>Replaces : version 5</b>
<b>Approved: PRHA Management Board 12 Sept 2018</b>	<b>File No. C 16</b>

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-1)

**Letter of Acknowledgement Following Receipt of Compliment/ Suggestion.**

Dear

Thank you for contacting us recently about (*give brief details of compliment/ suggestion*).

We like to hear from our service users about how we are providing a good service, or if we can improve things in any way.

I have passed your comments on to [*name of person/department*] for their information.

Once again, thank you for your views.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Director of.....

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
Governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-2)

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter of Acknowledgement Following Receipt of Complaint (Stage 1)**

Dear

Thank you for contacting us recently about *(give brief details of complaint)*

I will be the person dealing with this matter. \*

or

I have passed this information on to [ ] who will be dealing with your complaint. \*

We will get back in touch with you by *[date 15 days from receipt of complaint]*.  
 In the meantime, if you need further information you can contact me/ ( )\*  
 on *[tel no]*

I am attaching a copy of the complaints policy for your information

Yours sincerely

Project Manager

*\*delete as appropriate*

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

(SF/CSC-3)

***Delay in Response to Stage 1 Complaint***

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

I am writing to you to let you know what is happening about your recent complaint.

We have not yet been able to complete our investigations. This is because...

We will, however, be able to respond to you by [date].

In the meantime, if you have any further comments or queries about this matter, please get in touch with me on [tel no].

Yours sincerely

Project Manager

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013</b>	<b>Replaces: version 4</b>
<b>governing Management Board: PRHA 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012</b>	<b>File No. C16</b>

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-4)

**Outcome of Investigation (Stage 1)**

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

We have now investigated the complaint you made recently about *[insert brief details of original complaint]*

After looking into the matter, our response is as follows:

*[Give details of outcome of investigation and any further action proposed]*

If you need further information or explanation about our findings, you can contact me on (Insert contact details).

If you are not happy with our response, you can take your complaint to stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure. You can do this by contacting PRHA's Performance & monitoring officer outlining the details of your complaint & explaining why you are not satisfied with the outcome of this investigation. Please talk to your Keyworker/ Housing officer or Service Manager if you require assistance to do this.

We aim to continuously improve the way that we manage complaints. We are attaching a complaints satisfaction form and would appreciate it if you would let us know if you are satisfied with the way that your complaint has been handled. Your feedback would be very helpful. A reply paid envelope is enclosed.

Yours sincerely  
Project Manager

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-5)

**Letter of Acknowledgement Following Receipt of Complaint (Stage 2)**

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

**Re: Stage 2 of Complaints Procedure.**

Thank you for informing us that you are not been happy with the outcome of stage 1 of the Complaint procedure and that you wish to proceed to stage 2.

I have passed this information on to [insert person's name] who will now deal with your complaint. \*

They will get back in touch with you by [date 15 days from receipt of complaint]. In the meantime, if you need further information you can contact [insert name] on [tel no]

I am attaching a copy of the complaints policy for your information

Yours sincerely

Performance & Monitoring Officer

Cc

*\*delete as appropriate*

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-6)

***Delay in Response to Stage 2 Complaint***

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

**Re: Stage 2 of Complaints Procedure.**

I am writing to you to let you know what is happening about your recent complaint.

We have not yet been able to complete our Stage 2 investigations. This is because

We will, however, be able to respond to you by *(date)*.

In the meantime, if you have any further comments about this matter, please get in touch with *(Insert name)* on *(tel no)*.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Director of .....

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
Governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-7)

**Outcome of Investigation (Stage 2)**

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

**Re: Stage 2 of Complaint Procedure.**

Following your request to proceed to stage 2 of the Complaints procedure, we have now completed a further investigation.

The results of this investigation are as follows:

*[Give details of outcome of investigation and any further action proposed]*

If you are still not happy about our response, you may make an appeal to the Panel of Management Board. (Stage 3 of the CSC procedure). If you wish to do this, you can ask your keyworker/ project Manager for advice on what to do.

We aim to continuously improve the way that we manage complaints. We are attaching a complaints satisfaction form and would appreciate it if you would let us know if you are satisfied with the way that your complaint has been handled. Your feedback would be very helpful. A reply paid envelope is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

Assistant Director of ...

CC

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
roving Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-8)

**Letter of Acknowledgement Following Stage 3 Appeal**

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

**Re: Stage 3 of Complaints Procedure**

I have received notice that you wish to refer your complaint to the Association's Appeals Panel. I have passed your complaint to the Chief Executive who will be dealing with this matter.

I have briefly outlined the process that this will involve:

Your complaint will be referred to the Appeals Panel which is made up of 3 Board members (one of whom may be a service user Board member).

The meeting of the Panel will take place by *[insert date no later than 25 days after receipt of stage 3 letter]*. Once this meeting has taken place and investigations have been completed, we will let you know what was decided.

We will contact you with an outcome by *[insert date no later than 15 days following the Appeals meeting]*

In the meantime, if you need further information about the progress of your appeal, you should contact *[Name and tel number]*

Yours sincerely

Performance & Monitoring Officer

Chief Executive's Office

Cc

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-9)

**Delay in Response to Stage 3 Complaint.**

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

**Re: Stage 3 of Complaints Procedure**

I am writing to let you know what is happening about your recent Complaint. The Appeals Panel has not been able to complete their Stage 3 investigations. This is because

We will, however, be able to respond to you by [date].

In the meantime, if you have any further comments about this matter, please contact [Name] on [tel no].

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive's Office

Cc

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

(SF/CSC-10)

**Outcome of Stage 3 Appeal Panel.**

CSC number: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

**Re: Stage 3 of Complaints Procedure**

The Appeals Panel has now completed their investigation of your complaint.

Their decision is as follows:

*[Give details of outcome of investigation and any action proposed]*

If you wish to discuss this further, please speak to your keyworker/Project Manager.

The decision of the Appeals Panel is final, and you have no further right of appeal using the Association's procedures. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the Panel's investigation, you may make a complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service. (details enclosed).

If your complaint was about the support provided by Providence Row Housing Association you may make a complaint to the Supporting People Team (details enclosed).

If you wish to complain to the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service, Supporting People Team or landlord\* you can ask your Keyworker/ housing officer /Project Manager for advice on how to do this.

We aim to continuously improve the way that we manage complaints. We are attaching a complaints satisfaction form and would appreciate it if you would let us know if you are satisfied with the way that your complaint has been handled. Your feedback would be very helpful. A reply paid envelope is enclosed.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive's Office.

\*Delete if not applicable (where PRHA is the Managing Agent),

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

## Service user's summary to Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments procedure

### 1. Introduction

- Providence Row Housing Association has a Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments procedure.
- Providence Row welcomes and encourages feedback from all our services users.
- The Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments procedure is an important source of information about service user satisfaction on the services that the association provides
- Receiving feedback allows our association to continuously improve the quality of services provided.
- All service users have the choice of whether to make a complaint, suggestions or compliment formal or informal.
- You can make a complaint, suggestion or compliment in writing or verbally.

### 2. Purpose of Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure

This procedure is intended to provide a way for:

- Clarifying situations where service users are not happy with our services, our staff or agents, or our procedures (**complaints**).
- Looking at areas of the services and identifying any necessary action, which may involve providing information to service users or making changes to services/procedures (**suggestions**).
- Using positive feedback from service users to inform the development of services and procedures (**compliments**)

### 3. Who is the Complaints, Suggestion and Compliments Procedure for?

- The procedure relates to all services within PRHA.
- The procedure is for use by anyone receiving a service from the PRHA. This includes applicants, service users and people acting on behalf of applicants/ service users.

### Suggestions and Compliments

- You can speak to or write to your keyworker about your suggestion/ compliment.
- On receipt of your suggestion /compliment, your letter will be forwarded to the relevant person/ department. You will be sent a letter of acknowledgement (within 5 working days).

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
roving Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

## **Complaints**

### **Complaints Advocates.**

If you require support to make your complaint, please speak with the Project Manager re Complaints Advocates. These are people outside of the association or trained service users within the organisation that can help you to make your complaint.

### **Informal Complaints Process**

- You can speak to or write to your keyworker about your complaint. Your complaint will be recorded and you will be addressed immediately.
- If you are not happy with the outcome of the informal stage you can proceed to the formal stage. You will need to do this within 4 weeks of receiving the outcome/ response to the informal stage.

### **Formal complaints process**

The formal complaints process is made up of 3 stages.

#### **Stage one**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your informal complaint or if you want to make your complaint formal from the beginning, you can take your complaint to your Project Manager.

- If you need help to make your complaint, ask one of PRHA staff or go to the local advice agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Project Manager will write to you acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 5 working days.
- A meeting will be held with an appropriate member of staff to attempt to resolve the complaint. This will be within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint
- You will receive an outcome letter within a further 5 working days.

This whole process will take 20 working days providing there is no need for an extension in deadline. If staff require extra time to investigate your complaint, they will write to you within the first 10 days of the investigation and let you know when they will send you an outcome letter.

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013</b>	<b>Replaces: version 4</b>
<b>governing Management Board: PRHA 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012</b>	<b>File No. C16</b>

<b>CLIENT SERVICES</b>	<b>Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure</b>
<b>Providence Row Housing Association</b>	<b>VERSION: 6</b>

## Stage 2

- Still not satisfied? Write to the Performance & Monitoring officer at PRHA; head office. They will write to you acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 5 working days & pass your complaint to the relevant Assistant Director / Head of Department for investigation.
- If you need help with making your complaint ask one of PRHA staff or go to the local advice agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Your complaint will be investigated within 15 working days of receipt of your complaint. The investigation may involve you meeting with the Assistant Director / Head of Department to clarify any areas of your complaint.
- Following the investigation you will receive an outcome letter within a further 5 working days.
- This whole process will take 20 working days providing there has not been a need for an extension in the deadline. If staff require extra time to investigate your complaint, they will write to you within the first 10 days of investigation.

## Stage 3

- Still not satisfied? Send an appeal to the Performance & monitoring officer who will write to you acknowledging receipt of your complaint within 5 working days. If you need help with making your appeal ask one of PRHA staff or go to the local advice agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Chief Executive will pass all information to do with your complaint to the Appeals Panel.
- The Appeals panel is made up of three Board members, and where possible should include a Board member who is also a service user.
- Your complaint will be investigated within 25 working days of receipt of your appeal, inclusive of an Appeals panel meeting. You will be invited to the Appeals panel to present your complaint.
- Following the investigation you will receive an outcome letter within a further 15 working days.
- This whole process will take 40 working days providing there has not been a need for an extension in the deadline. If staff require extra time to investigate your complaint, they will write to you within the first 25 days of investigation.
- This is the final stage of the internal complaints process.

<b>Policy Effective Date: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013</b>	<b>Replaces: version 4</b>
<b>governing Management Board: PRHA 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012</b>	<b>File No. C16</b>

CLIENT SERVICES	Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Procedure
Providence Row Housing Association	VERSION: 6

## External

- Still not satisfied? If you are not satisfied with any of the answers provided by the internal process you can write to the Housing Ombudsman at:

Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
London  
WC2B 4HN

**Telephone**  
**0300 111 3000**

**Fax**  
020 7831 1942

**Email**  
[info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

- If your complaint is about support services provided by PRHA you can write to the Local Authority Supporting People Team. You can obtain the contact details from your Project Manager.
- If your property is owned by another Housing Association (Not PRHA), you can write to them, as your Landlords. Speak to your Project Manager/ Assistant Director for the contact details.

## Where complaints are about specific staff, you will need to take the following action.

If the complaint is about your Project Manager, send your letter to the Performance & monitoring officer at head office who will pass it to the relevant Assistant Director, (Stage 2).

If the complaint is about the Assistant Director/Head of Department, send your letter to the Performance & monitoring officer at head office who will pass it to the Chief Executive at (Stage 2).

If the complaint is about the Chief Executive, send your letter to the Chair, care of PRHA head office. (Stage 3)

## Flow charts

Please see the attached flowcharts for a further breakdown of the Complaints procedure.

Policy Effective Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2013	Replaces: version 4
governing Management Board: PRHA 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	File No. C16