



# Ash- Shahada Housing Association

## Complaints Policy

### Making a Complaint

It is important to us that we listen to our tenants and provide services that meet and exceed expectations. Customers often tell us this and provide us with compliments about the service they receive. However, sometimes, things may not go right and you may wish to complain about the service you receive. We take all complaints seriously and see them as an opportunity to learn and improve our services and our relationship with tenants.

A complaint is **an expression of dissatisfaction**, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

We view a complaint as your way of telling us that you are not satisfied with the standard of our services, our actions or lack of action, and the conduct of our staff or contractors, which affect you as an individual or tenant group.

### Our Commitment

Some of the time, we get things wrong and we want to hear about this so that we can have the opportunity to put things right.

When dealing with complaints, we will:

- Make it easy for you to make a complaint.
- Give you a prompt response.
- Sort out the problem efficiently and fairly.
- Be fair, polite and helpful.
- Help you fill in the complaints form if you have difficulty.
- Keep you up to date with the progress of your complaint.
- Treat your complaint confidentially.
- Give you the right to a second opinion.
- Inform you about what to do if you are not happy with the outcome.
- Feedback is invaluable in helping us improve our services.



## **Who can make a complaint?**

A tenant living in a property owned or managed by us, former tenants, applicants, group complaints or advocates acting on behalf of residents.

People who live next door to one of our properties can also complain about the behaviour of our tenants, residents and their visitors, and about any damage caused to their property including lack of repair to our property.

## **What can I complain about?**

You can complain if you feel something is wrong and we have not put it right. It gives you the opportunity to put right something we should have done.

### **You may want to complain because:**

- we have failed to carry out our legal duties as your landlord.
- you feel that our policies or practices are unfair.
- you believe that we have not followed our own rules properly or have failed to act efficiently in delivering a service to you; or
- you feel that a member of staff has behaved improperly or has been impolite or that the member of staff has treated you poorly; or that
- We have failed to provide a service.

### **You cannot complain about:**

- anything that happened 12 months ago, unless you have only become aware of the situation. However, we may consider your complaint even after 12 months if there are extenuating circumstances that prevented you from raising your complaint such as bereavement or illness.
- matters currently being dealt with by the Ombudsman.
- where legal action has begun and if the complaint is part of the legal action. Legal proceedings refer to matters being considered by the courts.
- complaints by one tenant about another. This is considered as neighbour dispute or anti-social behaviour (ASB). Reports about anti-social behaviour are dealt with through our ASB policy/process. However, if your complaint concerns how a report about ASB has been handled by us, we will deal with it as a formal complaint.
- A routine first-time request to have a service provided.
- We will not consider complaints about our ownership of a lease or property in a particular area or street.



## How to make a complaint

If you want to complain it is important that you tell us what you want us to do to put things right. Your complaint can be made in person at our office, by phone, through writing, email, or through our website [www.ash-shahada.org](http://www.ash-shahada.org). A nominated representative can also make a complaint on your behalf provided you have given them consent to complain for you. We will only deal with your complaint informally if you agree.

### When making a complaint, please tell us the following:

- Your full name and address
- Explain in detail what your complaint is about; and
- How you think the matter can be resolved.

### Stage 1

At this stage, your complaint will be dealt with by the Cluster Representative.

When we receive your complaint, the Cluster Representative will engage with you or your representative. They will request details about the complaint, and this will be logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the complaint being received. The Cluster Representative will try to resolve it as quickly as possible. They will respond to the complaint **within 10 working days** of it being acknowledged. If there is any further delay in responding which will depend on the nature and complexity of the complaint, in which case more time may be needed, you will be informed.

The complaint will be deemed as closed once a resolution has been provided, the customer has been informed of our actions or a response has been provided. It will also be deemed closed if there is no further contact from the customer within 2 weeks after we have advised of the outcome.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome at this stage, you can then request the Office Manager or Director Operations to resolve your complaint.

### Stage 2

At this stage, your complaint will be dealt with by the Office Manager or Director Operations.

They will request details about the complaint and log the complaint at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure. The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the complaint being received. The Office Manager or Director Operations will try and resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. They will respond to your complaint **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged. If there is any further delay in responding which will depend on the nature and complexity of the complaint, in which case more time may be needed, they



will write to inform you and explain the reason(s) for the delay and provide a date when you will know the outcome. This will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.

The complaint will be deemed as closed once a resolution has been provided, the customer has been informed of our actions or a response has been provided. It will also be deemed closed if there is no further contact from the customer within 2 weeks after we have advised of the outcome.

If you are not happy with the decision of the Office Manager or Director Operations, you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman's Service to review the decision.

## **Unacceptable Behaviour**

We may refuse to respond to customers regarding the complaint raised if the contact is deemed to be vexatious in nature. This will include behaviour that causes intentional annoyance or harassment.

Unacceptable behaviour within the complaints process can be characterised by:

- Actions which are harassing, prolific, repetitive, or obsessive.
- An insistence upon pursuing complaints without merit and/or unreasonable outcomes.
- An insistence on pursuing a complaint in an unreasonable manner.
- Aggressive or abusive behaviour – for example, abusive language (oral or written), threats, rudeness.
- Complainants or someone acting on their behalf threatening, or taking, violent action.
- Unreasonable demands – for example, insisting on an unreasonable timescale, repeatedly changing the substance of the complaint, insisting on speaking to a colleague.
- Unreasonable persistence – for example, refusing to accept an outcome, apology, or resolution, pursuing a complaint without presenting any new information.

Unacceptable behaviour may be identified by any advisor in the business. The decision to classify a complaint as unacceptable must be made Director Operations who will review the contact from the complainant. This can result in:

- Terminating a complaint early
- Restricting all communication to writing
- Declining further communication on a specific issue
- Dealing with the complaint in a different way to that outlined in the policy and guidelines.

We do not tolerate threatening or harassing behaviour and will take firm action against any complainant acting in this manner.



## **Anonymous Complaints**

It is not possible to investigate anonymous feedback and understand the customer's specific concerns or provide them with specific detail as to how the feedback has been resolved. The feedback will nevertheless be considered since it is still important as a driver towards improved customer service.

## **Outcomes and remedies**

There are two possible outcomes for a complaint:

- Upheld (in the complainant's favour)
- Not upheld (in ASHA's favour)

If the complaint is not upheld, the customer will be informed, usually in writing. Reason(s) of why it may have not been upheld will be provided.

We must manage the expectations with customers and it is important that everyone knows what outcomes can be achieved. Where complaints are upheld, remedies can include:

- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong.
- Providing an explanation, assistance, or reason.
- Apologising.
- Taking action if there has been a delay or we should have done something differently.
- Reconsidering or changing a decision.
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum.
- Providing a financial remedy.
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.
- An explanation as to what went wrong and the way we have handled the matter. This can be a face to face discussion/appointment.
- A commitment to review processes to avoid the same thing happening again.
- A change, review or remedial action in working practices and policy/procedures.
- Feedback on how their complaint has been used to improve the service in the future.

In some circumstances, we may not uphold a complaint and we will not be able to offer a remedy which is satisfactory to the customer. In these cases, we will use the complaint to learn.

## **Housing Ombudsman**

Please note that the Housing Ombudsman Service will only consider complaints that have been investigated through stages 1-2 above.

The Housing Ombudsman's address is:

**Housing Ombudsman Service**  
**PO Box 152**  
**Liverpool, L33 7WQ**



**Telephone: 0300 111 3000**

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

You can complain to the Housing Ombudsman's Service at <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/about-us/corporate-information/policies/dispute-resolution/policy-on-remedies/>

You may wish to involve an external organisation to assist you with resolving your complaint. You can get help to make a complaint by contacting the Citizens Advice Bureau on the website - [www.cab.org.uk](http://www.cab.org.uk).

Please use the form below to provide us with details about your complaint. If you need an accessible format of the form below, or if you require assistance to complete it, please let us know.

***Last Review: April 2024***

***Summary of changes: Revised to take account of Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code 2024 and changes in the law***

***Next Review Date: April 2025***



**COMPLAINTS FORM  
AND CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

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If you have a complaint or enquiry about any aspect of the service provided by Ash-Shahada, which has not been resolved, it would help us if you use this form to make your complaint, please write a letter, or telephone, if you prefer. Send your complaint, with any supporting documents to:

**The Housing Officer  
Ash-Shahada Housing Association  
Daily Times House  
43/45 Coldharbour Lane  
London SE5 9NR**

1. Surname

2. Forename(s)

3. Address

4. Day Time Telephone Number

5. Complaint:



<b>6</b>	<b>The people I have spoken to are:</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>I would like Ash-Shahada to take the following action(s) to resolve my complaint:</b>
<b>Signed</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____	





## **Confidential Questionnaire on Equal Opportunities**

Ash-Shahada is opposed to any form of discrimination. We want to know if anyone is suffering any prejudice because of their race, colour, sex, disability, household or age.

You do not have to fill in this questionnaire, but it will help us to see if we are achieving these aims and to help improve our services to you.

Your answers will be kept separate from your application and will be completely confidential. We will use them for statistical purposes only.

I would describe myself as the following ( tick one box only)

White  British  Irish

Other  (please give details) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mixed  White and Black Caribbean  White and Black African  White and Asian

Other (please give details)  \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Asian or Asian British  Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi

Other (please give details)  \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Black or Black British  Caribbean  African

Other (please give details)  \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Chinese  Other (please give details)  \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



I do not want to answer

My colour is: Black  White

Other (please give details)

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I am: Female  Male

I consider myself to be disabled or have disabilities. Yes  No

My household is:

A couple  A couple with a child or children

A single person  A single person with a child or children

My age is:

16 to 25  26 to 40  41 to 60  61 to 75  over 75

**Review Date:**

**Thank you**