

Braughing Housing Association

A Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act,
2014

Complaints Policy

This Policy is to support a transparent and effective process of handling complaints from residents.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service or lack of action by the Association affecting one or more residents. Complaints may come from various sources, from contractors to social media, but must all be treated under this policy. Complaints may begin as service requests – not in themselves complaints – which should be recorded in the same way. The resident should be advised of the action, which should be monitored. Complaints must be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to, but if the association decides not to accept then a detailed explanation must be provided to the resident and referred to the Ombudsman if they wish to take it further.

The complaints process must be communicated to residents. It must be reviewed, updated and circulated to residents annually. The process must be clear and detail the stages involved and timeframes for response. It should also include contact details for the Ombudsman.

The Association will have a person or persons with responsibility for ensuring complaints receive the necessary attention and these are reported to the Members. The person(s) will be referred to as the “complaints officer”.

It will also have a separate “appeals officer” to further investigate and deal with any complaints that are contested by a resident or the Housing Ombudsman.

Minor matters should preferably be emailed as they arise to the BHA email account (BraughingHousingAssociation@gmail.com) which can be accessed by the Chair of Braughing Housing Association. These should be attended to without delay. Emails should be retained. If there has been no response, or the matter is urgent, the resident can escalate by contacting a member of the Association committee. (All members’ names and telephone numbers are published in the complaints leaflet which is distributed at least annually.)

If email is not used, a record should be created of both the resident’s report and the action taken; and retained. If it cannot be dealt with quickly, or affects another committee member, it should be circulated to the committee. Action and who will carry it out, and who should give a response should be agreed.

An early resolution of residents’ issues should be attempted wherever possible and any decision to try and resolve a concern must be taken with the resident’s knowledge.

The Association must keep to any reasonable arrangements agreed with residents in terms of frequency and method of communication.

The complaints policy must include timescales for a resident to request escalation of a complaint.

Stage 1

The Association will respond within 10 working days of the complaint being logged. All points raised in the complaint will be addressed. At the end of this first stage the Association will confirm in writing:

- the complaint stage,
- the complaint definition,
- the decision,
- the reasons for any decisions,
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right,
- details of any outstanding actions,
- details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the resident is not satisfied with the answer.

Stage 2

If the complaint is not completely resolved it must progress to Stage 2. If the Association determines not to escalate it will communicate to the resident in writing its reasons and advise the resident of their right to approach the Ombudsman.

The Association will appoint a different person to consider the complaint at stage 2 than the person dealing with it at stage 1. The Association will respond within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.

At the end of this second stage the Association will confirm in writing:

- the complaint stage;
- the complaint definition,
- the decision,
- the reasons for any decisions,
- the details of any remedy offered to put things right,
- details of any outstanding actions,
- details of how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service if the resident remains dissatisfied.

Putting things right

Where something has gone wrong the Association must acknowledge this and set out the actions it has taken, or intends to take which can include:

- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons
- Apologising

- Taking action if there has been a delay
- Reconsidering or changing a decision
- Amending a record
- Providing a financial remedy
- Changing policies, procedures or practices

The remedy offer must set out what will happen by when, in agreement with the resident as appropriate.

A Member of the Association has lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive culture in handling complaints, and should report to the Association the number, nature, and outcomes of any formal complaints.

The Association should review this policy every March along with its recording of complaints in the previous year with a view to learn about issues and any trends. An annual self-assessment of outcomes to ensure that complaint handling is in line with this policy. The outcome of the self-assessment should be made accessible to residents.

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/understand-complaints-process/>

Phone number: on 0300 111 3000

9.15am - 5.15pm, Mon to Fri

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

The BHA leaflet “Getting things right” should reflect this policy and be given to all residents every year. This policy and the leaflet should be reviewed every year.

BHA. May 2025