

Complaints Policy

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| Policy context: This policy relates to | |
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| Standards or other external requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Regulatory System of Community Housing (NRSCH) |
| Legislation or other requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT) Privacy Act 1998 (Cth) Community Housing (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2013 (NT) |
| Contractual obligations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractual agreements with funding bodies Employment contracts |
| CHCA Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeals Policy |

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1. Overview

This policy explains what a complaint is, how our customers can make a complaint and how we will manage complaints that we receive.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints received from applicants, tenants and stakeholders of Community Housing Central Australia. This policy does not deal with complaints from tenants about other tenants, members of the public or other tenants complaining about our tenants' behaviours (see Tenancy Behaviour Complaints Policy) or appeals, which are dealt with under our Appeals policy.

3. Underpinning principles

- Applicants, tenants and stakeholders have the right to complain and will not be disadvantaged for making a complaint.
- We will be fair and transparent when dealing with complaints.
- We welcome complaints and will use the outcomes to improve our service.
- Applicants and tenants are encouraged to get help from an advocate or support person at any point during the complaints process.

4. Definition

4.1. Complaint

A complaint is when a customer tells us that they are unhappy with our service or products and the person expects a response from us. A person can complain about our services or products even if the service or product is being delivered by someone else for us.

A complaint is not a request for information and is different to an appeal.

4.2. Complainant

The complainant is the person making the complaint.

4.3. Appeal

An appeal is when someone asks us to review a decision we made.

4.4. Working days

Working days means days our offices are open. It does not include weekends and public holidays.

5. How to lodge a complaint

If a customer is unhappy with our service or products, they should make a complaint as soon as possible.

Our preference is for complaints to be received in writing such as email or letter.

Complaints should be made within 3 months from the time of the issue.

People can appeal by email, phone or send a letter as outlined below:

Email: info@chca.org.au

Telephone: 08 8952 1266

Address: 3/21 Gregory Terrace, Alice Springs, 0870

6. Standards in responding to complaints

We will acknowledge complaints in writing within 3 working days of receiving them.

We will assess and respond to a complaint within 20 working days from the date we receive it. If we think there might be a delay in our response, we will tell the person who made the complaint how long we think our response will take and the reasons for the delay.

If the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT), we may tell the person about any time limits that apply if they are thinking about applying to the tenancy tribunal. It is the responsibility of the complainant to determine whether they should lodge an application with the tenancy tribunal.

7. Investigating complaints

Complaints will be directed to a delegated Representative who will formally lodge the complaint and coordinate the complaints handling process.

Our delegated Representative will be the next senior staff member that has not been directly involved in the matter, typically the Coordinator, Operations Manager or Chief Executive Officer.

The delegated Representative is also available to discuss complaints to see if the matter can be resolved without the need for a formal complaint.

Any complaints received about the CEO or a Director will be directed to the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Complaints being handled by the Chairman of the Board of Directors will be monitored via Board meetings. Any complaints other than those about the CEO or a Director, received by a Director will be referred to the CEO who will delegate the complaint.

When we investigate a complaint, we will consider all information available at the time of making the complaint and will be fair and transparent.

8. Responding to complaints

Once we have investigated the complaint, we will respond to the person in writing and tell them the outcome of their complaint. Our response will explain the reason for our decision and will explain the options the person has if they are still not happy.

9. Records of complaints

Complaints will be confidential, unless the person making the complaint give us permission to disclose the matter or when we are authorised or required to disclose the information by law.

Complaints will only be discussed with our team as needed to investigate the complaint. Substantiated complaints about our employees will be kept in the employees personnel file and action will be taken under our relevant policies and procedures.

Complaints will be recorded in our electronic Feedback Register with limited access by employees. If the person making the complaint is an applicant or tenant, the complaint will be noted on their electronic record.

We will monitor trends in complaints, to improve our service or where required by contractual, legal or regulatory requirements.

10. Feedback

After the complaint process is complete, we might ask the person to provide feedback on their experience. Any feedback received will be confidential and used to improve our service.

11. Corruption

If a complaint concerns corrupt conduct, the matter will be referred to the CEO or the Chairperson. All such information will be treated in a confidential manner.

12. Other avenues

Making a formal complaint doesn't stop the person from taking other action. This may include:

- Seeking support from their local Member of Parliament. www.parliament.nt.gov.au/members/by-name
- Contacting the Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service www.dcls.org.au/tenants-advice or 08 8982 1111
- Community Legal Centre for information, advice and advocacy. www.naaja.org.au or 08 8982 5100
- Making an application to the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) if they believe we have not met our legal duties under the Residential Tenancy Act. www.ntcat.nt.gov.au or 1800 604 622
- Making a complaint to the Northern Territory Registrar for Community Housing. NRSCH.TFHC@nt.gov.au
- Making a complaint through the Northern Territory Government Public Housing Complaints and Appeals Mechanism housing.complaints@nt.gov.au or 1300 301 167

13. Managing unreasonable complainant conduct

We may modify or limit contact with a complainant where a complainant's behaviour has been unreasonable.

14. Related documents/resources

- Appeals Policy
- Customer Service Charter