



# Complaints Policy

Company No: 11567414  
Registered Provider No: 5094  
Version 2.1 – February 2025

## Simply Affordable Homes RP (SAH) Limited

### COMPLAINTS POLICY

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. We want customers to be happy and feel safe in their home and with the services we provide. However, we recognise that sometimes things can go wrong, and our residents may feel cause to complain.
- 1.2. This policy sets out our approach to managing complaints and applies to all customers and any individual or group affected by the services we provide. It complies with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, Building Safety Regulations and requirements of the RSH Consumer Standards.
- 1.3. In line with the Housing Ombudsman Code, we define a complaint as:  
*'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a customer or group of customers.'*
- 1.4. A customer does not need to explicitly use the word 'complaint' for one to be treated as such.
- 1.5. We positively welcome feedback in the form of complaints from anyone who is affected by a service we provide, or decisions taken by us, including:
  - Customers named on a tenancy, or lease, for any of our properties.
  - Any third party adversely affected by our actions or decisions.
  - Any person acting on behalf of a customer with their consent; for example, a family member, neighbour, advice agency, member of parliament, councillor, or the Housing Ombudsman.
- 1.6. We aim to provide a good and reliable service to all our customers and to treat all feedback as a learning opportunity to improve services.
- 1.7. We are committed to responding fairly, effectively, and promptly to all expressions of dissatisfaction; in addition to delivering a high standard of service to ensure that any identified actions are carried out as quickly as possible and that communication is timely and accurate.

## 2. Our approach

- 2.1. Complaints can be reported in different ways to either SAH staff, or to our appointed property managers - by telephone, in person, in writing by letter or by email and/or online/by app.
- 2.2. A complaint may be also made in the form of a petition. The complaint will be dealt with following the normal complaints procedure, at the address of the first signatory only. The petition will be treated as one complaint and all correspondence will be addressed to the first signatory.
- 2.3. We will provide reasonable adjustment for those who may need it to make a complaint in line with our reasonable adjustment statement.
- 2.4. For complaints to be investigated effectively, all complaints should be submitted within 12 months of when the event occurred, or it became known to the complainant. We may exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances when considering whether to accept a complaint submitted outside of this timescale.
- 2.5. When an expression of dissatisfaction is received, we would first look to our appointed property managers resolving the matter locally, or by their relevant contract manager.
- 2.6. If this approach has not reached the desired resolution, or it is deemed inappropriate, it can be registered and dealt with as a formal complaint.

## 3. Formal Complaints Process

- 3.1. Our formal complaints procedure comprises of two stages:

**Stage one** - will be an investigation carried out by a senior manager employed by our appointed property managers. All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt; we will complete our review and respond within 10 working days.

**Stage two** - If the complaint is escalated, a joint review will be carried out by a Director within Simply Affordable Homes and a different senior manager within our appointed property managers. We will acknowledge the request within 5 working days of receipt; and a full response will be provided within 20 working days of the acknowledgement being sent. A complainant does not have to explain their reasons for escalating to stage 2. This is the final stage of our complaints process.

- 3.2. In exceptional circumstances, it may take a longer time to reply at any of the two stages. The manager carrying out the investigation will let the complainant know of any delay, and they will give a new date for reply.

- 3.3. We will advise complainants throughout the life of the complaint of their right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service and the opportunity to engage with the Ombudsman Dispute Support Advisors.
- 3.4. If the complaint reaches stage two of our complaint's procedure and a meeting is convened, the first signatory may attend the complaints panel with one other signatory. Details of the outcome of the complaint will be copied to each signatory on the petition once it has been resolved.
- 3.5. Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to take their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman at the below address:

The Housing Ombudsman  
Housing Ombudsman Services  
PO Box 152  
Liverpool, L33 7WQ  
Tel: 0300 111 3000  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
Web: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

- 3.6. Confidentiality and data protection apply to the complaints process; we will not share personal, or property information gathered as part of the complaint investigation with any third party who is not entitled to receive it, in line with data protection legislation.
- 3.7. There are some things that we will not deal with through our complaint's procedure - this could be because:
  - A service request, this would only become a complaint if SAH failed to deal with the request within specified timescales, or in accordance with the service offer.
  - An explanation of, or challenge to, a policy or procedure; although we can look at how that policy or procedure has been applied. We will use this feedback when reviewing our policies or procedures.
  - Any matter that can be appealed to an outside body, for example, the Housing Benefit Tribunal, the Planning Inspectorate, and the Parking Adjudicators.
  - A complaint about another resident, as part of a neighbour dispute for example.
  - Where legal action is in progress. However, if a solicitor is acting as an advocate for a customer, this will be logged as a complaint, and it will be dealt with in the usual way.
  - They involve insurance claims.

- Complaints about a service provided by an external provider (other than our property managers) will be considered dependent upon our contractual relationship with the external provider.
  - If a resident continues to pursue communication about a complaint where they have chosen not to escalate it, or where it has already been investigated, they will be advised that the complaint will not be re-investigated. This will not impact their right to raise complaints about new issues.
- 3.8. In these cases, we'll let the complainant know why we are unable to consider their concern as a complaint and will give them the option to state their case or bring it to the Ombudsman.
- 3.9. We will never take a blanket approach to excluding complaints or complainants; we will consider each individual and circumstances before making a decision.
- 3.10. We recognise that complaints are often an early indication that something is not working and have developed practices where complaints give us a greater understanding of our residents' expectations; helping us reduce disruption to service provision and prevent repeat complaints of the same nature.

#### 4. Review

##### Quality monitoring, feedback and reporting

- 4.1. We will seek feedback from our customers about how their complaint was handled and how satisfied they were with the outcome.
- 4.2. We will use the learning from complaints to improve our services and publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints, and any service improvements made.
- 4.3. We will regularly seek and review feedback and engage/consult our customers about the services we offer via various other methods and forums – which will also be used to help us to improve our standards, services and general offering.
- 4.4. We will undertake an annual program of customer satisfaction surveys, in line with the regulator's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) and review all relevant customer complaints to identify any potential trends in service failures.
- 4.5. We will complete an annual self-assessment against the HoS code, or following a significant restructure, and/or change in procedures in line with Regulatory requirements and consumer standards.

- 4.6. We will hold regular meetings with our property managers/key contractors to discuss performance in general and against KPI's (key performance indicators), and operational performance summary reports are also produced and issued to senior management and our Board, on an at least a quarterly basis.
- 4.7. All of the above will help us continue to identify opportunities to improve the services we provide and to ensure we are getting value for money from our property managers and contractors.

**5. Key Legislation (but not limited to)**

- Localism Act 2011
- Housing Act 1996
- General Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Ombudsman Scheme
- Consumer Standards

**6. Policy review**

- 6.1. We will review this policy every two years to address customer feedback, legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues, unless otherwise needed.

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**Appendix 1 – Revision History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Comments / Changes</b>
17/04/2024	1.0	Initial version
28/05/2024	1.1	Minor changes
July 2024	2.0	CT review
February 2025	2.1	New template and review
February 2027		Review
xx 2029		Review