



PRIMA
GROUP

**Customer
Complaints Policy**

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Customer Complaints Policy

1 Aim of the Policy

Prima Group aims to provide a high quality and value for money service to its customers. The aim of this policy is to outline how Prima Group will process customer Complaints and feedback, whilst striving to create a positive culture and driving service improvement

2 Policy Statement

Prima Group aims to provide a high quality and value for money service to its customers. We welcome complaints and feedback as a means of correcting failures in performance and improving services and levels of satisfaction with our services.

The Group will endeavour to resolve the service failure to the complainant's satisfaction at the first point of contact, where appropriate. At all stages of the complaints process the Group will endeavour to deal with the matter as quickly as possible.

The Group will ensure that its policy on customer complaints will be published on its website and in a separate leaflet. Copies of the policy will also be available on request.

3 Definition of a Complaint

A complaint shall be defined as 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.

A complaint can be made using any of the contact methods provided by the Group, however in order to track and monitor complaints effectively the Group's preferred method to report a complaint is via the online complaints form on the Prima Group Website www.primagroup.org

Complaints will generally include the following, although the list is not exhaustive:

- a) failure of the Group to provide a service at the level or standard expected;
- b) the unhelpful attitude of an employee or contractor of the Group;
- c) neglect or delay in answering a query or responding to a request for service; outside of our published standards
- d) delay or neglect with respect to administrative processes; outside of our published standards
- e) failure to follow the Group's agreed policies, rules or procedures;
- f) failure to consider all relevant information in coming to a decision;
- g) failure to fulfil statutory or contractual responsibilities; and
- h) malice, bias, inequity or discrimination

The following types of complaint are excluded from this procedure:

- a) requests for a service, like the first report of a repair;
- b) complaints which amount to a disagreement with the Group about its decisions rather than the way the decisions have been carried out e.g. rent levels;
- c) a decision where regulatory powers are being exercised, unless the complaint relates to the way the matter has been administered;
- d) complaints about action taken in relation to appointments, dismissals, pay, discipline, superannuation or other personnel matters;
- e) anonymous complaints;
- f) complaints about neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour. This is dealt with under a separate policy; Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy. However, it can become a complaint when it is a failure on the part of Prima Group's service or the way in which the ASB complaint has been handled.

4 Who can complain?

A complaint may be made by anyone receiving or seeking a service from the Group. A complaint must, in normal circumstances, be made within three months following the provision of a service. A person may make a complaint on behalf of someone else, with their consent.

5 Complaints from other parties

In the event of a complaint being received from someone other than a person who has received or is seeking a service, the Group will operate a modified version of the Customer Complaints Policy and Procedure appropriate to the nature of the complaint in question. This will incorporate all of the key elements of the Customer Complaints Policy and Procedure, including the Appeals Process.

Details of such complaints will be recorded in the same way as customer complaints and complainants.

6 Recording and monitoring of complaints

On the working day a formal complaint is received, the relevant information relating to the complaint will be recorded. We will ensure all relevant details of the complaint and correspondence relating to the complaint is kept centrally as a formal complaint case.

7 Appeal

- a) If the complainant is unhappy with the response received to their complaint, they can appeal to a Panel. They will also be offered the opportunity of a personal hearing with the Panel.

- b) The Association will aim to hold the Panel hearing at a time that is convenient for the complainant and without unreasonable delay. A full response will be provided to the complainant within 20 working days of the request to escalate the complaint. However, this may be varied either by mutual agreement, or if required due to key members of the panel being unavailable. This should not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.

8 End of Prima Group's Complaints Procedure

If the complainant is still dissatisfied with the result of their appeal or the way in which it is being handled, the complainant can wait eight weeks and contact the Ombudsman directly.

OR

Refer the matter to a designated person. The designated person will choose to resolve it or pass it to the Ombudsman straight away. Prima Group does not currently have a designated person recognised and registered to the Ombudsman. The complainant should be given the following address to contact the Ombudsman:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152 Liverpool L33 7WQ Telephone : 0300 111 3000
Fax: 020 7831 1942
Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Ombudsman will seek to resolve complaints once the Group's own procedures have been exhausted. This service is free for the complainant

9 Vexatious Complaints

We recognise that on occasion complaints made can be vexatious. The Group will not tolerate continuous vexatious complaints and will take appropriate action through the enforcement of the tenancy or advise the customer the way in which their tenancy and communication with us will be managed in future.

10 Sources of advice and information

Multi-agency complaints involving the police or social services can be difficult to resolve. We will sign post and support the complainant in cases where resolution of the complaint sits across other agencies rather than with the Prima Group.

11 Resolution and compensation

Resolution of a complaint may involve one of the following:

- An apology;
- A change in policy;
- A goodwill gesture, e.g. flowers, gift voucher;
- A compensation payment.

Where payments of compensation have been paid by the organisation these will be logged formally to ensure a clear audit trail is recorded to track expenditure and any failures in service.

12 Monitoring, Delivery and Performance

Details of all complaints will be reported regularly to Managers and to the Customer Board annually.

Satisfaction surveys will be carried out once the case has been closed. The outcomes and lessons learnt will be monitored and reported to the Customer Board. Performance on complaints will be published in the tenants' newsletter and on the website.

Any lessons learned or changes needed in policies and procedures will be made as required.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires employers to comply with principles for processing personal data, including protecting against unauthorised access of personal data. Personal data that is inappropriately accessed or disclosed may constitute a data breach. The GDPR requires organisations to keep a record of all data breaches and, where the breach is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the organisation must notify the Information Commissioner within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach. If the data breach results in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, those individuals must be notified without undue delay.

13 Document Control Data

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