

Complaints Scenarios

A concern may not necessarily be a complaint. For example, a customer might make a routine first-time request for a service. This is not a complaint, but the issue may escalate into a complaint if it is not handled effectively and the customer has to keep asking for service.

A customer may also be concerned about the various decisions we make. These decisions may have their own specific review or appeal procedures, and, where appropriate, we should direct customers to the relevant procedure. However, if a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the administrative process we have followed to arrive at a decision, we should treat this as a complaint. This distinction is shown in the example below about how an allocations policy applies.

The following paragraphs provide examples of the types of issues or concerns that should not be handled through the complaints handling procedure. This is not a full list, and you should decide the best route for resolution based on the Individuals' case.

Example 1: Housing allocation decisions

Decisions about the allocation of homes follow a specific internal policy, in line with legal requirements. You should steer customers who are dissatisfied with an allocation decision towards the associated appeals process.

Customer A complains that they were not given enough priority for housing, given their current housing circumstances and health needs.

Steer the customer towards the appeals process for allocation decisions. However, if the customer is dissatisfied about how we applied the policy or administered the process, the complaint can go through this CHP.

Customer B complains that a home was allocated to someone else, who they knew were in less need than them, and had not been on the waiting list as long.

Record the customer's complaint. Explain that personal details are not disclosed, so we cannot discuss the other applicant's details. The customer will also need to be clear that we will review the basis for the decision to see if we are at fault.

If we find that the decision was based on sound evidence of need, inform the customer of the outcome. But if there is evidence that there was maladministration (fault) in the process followed to reach our decision, we must take suitable action and inform Customer B.

Update the complaint as appropriate and consider whether to report the case to senior management/ the management committee.

Customer B can also request a review of their circumstances or may appeal their points through the appeals process.

Example 2: Claims for compensation

A customer may seek compensation from us if they consider us liable. This includes issues such as personal injury or loss of or damage to property. Claims for compensation only are not complaints, so you should not handle them through the complaints handling procedure. However, where a customer wants to complain about the matter leading to their request for compensation, for example workmen damaging their home, you may consider that matter as a complaint, but deal with the request for compensation separately. You may decide to suspend complaint action pending the outcome of the claim for compensation. If you do this, you should notify the customer and explain that the complaint will be fully considered when the compensation claim has been resolved.

If you receive a compensation claim, you should explain to the customer the process for seeking resolution in line with our policy on these claims.

You can still make 'time and trouble' payments for inconvenience suffered by customers, in line with our policy on such matters. This is distinct from compensation claims.

Example 3: Antisocial behaviour complaints

We must respond well to concerns or dissatisfaction about our tenants' behaviour from a neighbour or a member of the public (for example, a home owner living near by). We initially handle such concerns through our [antisocial behaviour or neighbour relations] policy. However, someone may complain about the way we have handled an antisocial behaviour complaint.

Mr A complains that his neighbour has been playing music late at night for the last three nights. This is the first time he has phoned to complain.

We should handle this through our antisocial behaviour policy. We should fully explain our process to Mr A, and say what he should do if the situation continues.

Ms B complains she has reported her neighbour's barking dog several times over the last year, and nothing has been done about it.

We should handle this as a complaint and pass it to the right team to establish what has happened so far and update Ms B. We should consider whether we applied our policy properly, and whether we could do anything else to resolve the situation. We should record the complaint on the complaints system.