



COMPLAINT POLICY

March 2025

Policy Control	
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At DHL Limited (DHL), we are committed to providing excellent services to our residents. This Complaints Handling Policy outlines our approach to addressing complaints in accordance with the Complaints Handling Code set by the Housing Ombudsman. We recognize the importance of an effective complaints process in ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 DHL is dedicated to handling complaints promptly, fairly, and transparently. We aim to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity, providing appropriate remedies and learning from the feedback received. This policy is aligned with the principles outlined in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, ensuring that our residents have a clear and accessible process to express their dissatisfaction and seek resolution.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The legal framework that underpins the policy takes into account the following legislation, regulation and codes of practice.
- Equality Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Housing Ombudsman Scheme Regulations 2023
 - Social Housing (regulation) Act 2023
- 3.2 This policy complies with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Standards and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

4. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 This policy applies to all complaints received by DHL or managing agents working on behalf of DHL.
- 4.2 The objective of this policy is to provide guidance to staff, residents and other key stakeholders about our complaint handling process. Our complaints handling procedure aims to establish a transparent, fair, and efficient process for addressing residents' expressions of dissatisfaction with our services, actions, or lack of action.

5. STAGES OF COMPLAINT

- 5.1 Our complaints handling process consists of two stages:
- 5.2 Stage 1: Complaints are acknowledged, defined, and logged within five working days. A full response is issued within 10 working days, with the option to extend up to 10 additional working days if needed, and the resident is informed of the expected timescale.
- 5.3 Stage 2: If the complaint is not resolved to the resident's satisfaction at Stage 1, it progresses to Stage 2. Requests for Stage 2 are acknowledged, defined, and logged within five working days. A final response is issued within 20 working days, with the option to extend up to 20 additional working days if needed, and the resident is informed of the expected timescale.
- 5.4 There is no stage 3. If a resident complaint cannot be resolved following DHL internal complaints process, the resident has the right to refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

6. MAKING A COMPLAINT

- 6.1 Residents can make a complaint through various channels, ensuring accessibility. They can raise complaints in person, in writing, by telephone, or through our online platform. All staff members are trained to handle complaints, and our residents are encouraged to reach out to any staff member. We recognize the importance of the Equality Act 2010 and provide suitable channels for residents who may need adjustments.
- 6.2 Residents can request a representative manage a complaint on their behalf and to be accompanied by a representative to any meeting regarding the complaint.

7. TIMELINE FOR RESPONSES

- 7.1 Complaints at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 will be responded to promptly, within the specified timelines. If an extension is required, residents will be informed, and contact details for the Ombudsman will be provided.
- 7.2 Performance monitoring in relation to complaints resolution and response times will be a key performance measure that should be reported to SLT and the Board regularly.

8. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

- 8.1 Residents have the right to escalate their complaints to the Housing Ombudsman under certain circumstances. It's essential to clarify that only residents who have signed a tenant or license agreement with DHL are eligible to use the Housing Ombudsman service. Here's when residents can make a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.
- 8.2 Unresolved Complaints: If a resident feels that their complaint has not been adequately addressed through DHL's internal complaint handling process and remains dissatisfied with the outcome, they have the option to escalate

their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

8.3 Complaint excluded: If Dawson decides to not accept a complaint the resident can raise this with the Ombudsman. If the Ombudsman does not agree, Dawson will be made to take on the complaint.

8.4 Eligibility: Only residents who have signed a tenant or license agreement with DHL are eligible to use the Housing Ombudsman service. This ensures that complaints handled by the Ombudsman are within its jurisdiction and adhere to its policies and procedures.

8.5 **Criteria for Escalation:**

Residents can escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman if:

- They have completed DHL's internal complaints process without satisfactory resolution.
- The complaint falls within the Housing Ombudsman's jurisdiction, which typically includes issues related to housing management, repairs, and tenant-landlord disputes.
- They are within the time limits set by the Housing Ombudsman for lodging a complaint (12 months)
- They disagreed with the exclusion of a complaint.

8.6 Lodging a Complaint: Residents must follow the Housing Ombudsman's procedures for lodging a complaint, which may include submitting relevant documentation and providing details of the complaint history with DHL.

8.7 Housing Ombudsman's Decision: Upon receiving a complaint, the Housing Ombudsman will investigate the matter independently and impartially. They will assess whether DHL has followed proper procedures and acted reasonably in handling the complaint.

8.8 Depending on the investigation's findings, the Housing Ombudsman may issue recommendations for resolution, including remedial actions or compensation, if warranted.

9. SERVICE REQUEST OR COMPLAINT

9.1 At DHL, we distinguish between service requests and complaints to ensure efficient resolution and resident satisfaction:

9.2 **Service Request**

- Resident requests action for specific issues like maintenance or repairs.
- Prioritize prompt response and resolution to uphold service quality.
- All requests are recorded, monitored, and acted upon promptly.

If a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request this will be classified as a complaint and follow the complaints process.

9.3 **Complaint**

- Expression of dissatisfaction about service standards affecting residents.
- Residents' expressions of concern are treated as complaints.
- View complaints as learning opportunities and address them transparently.
- thoroughly investigate each complaint, take appropriate actions, and document outcomes.

9.4 Although we do not consider a service request a complaint we are committed to prompt, fair, and empathetic resolution in each case. Our staff will promote proactive communication and collaboration with residents.

9.5 There are only a few instances where DHL will not consider a complaint, these include:

- The complaint issues occurred over 12 months ago.
- Legal proceedings have already begun.
- Matters which have already been considered under this complaints policy.

9.6 DHL will not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints and will consider each complaint individually.

10. **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

10.1 At DHL, we are committed to effectively managing complaints in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code. To ensure clarity and efficiency in the complaint handling process, the following roles and responsibilities are defined:

Operations Team:

10.2 The Operations Team is responsible for leading and managing complaints across DHL. Responsibilities of the Operations Team include:

- Receiving, logging, and acknowledging complaints in a timely manner.
- Investigating complaints thoroughly and impartially.
- Providing appropriate responses and resolutions to complainants within specified timeframes.
- Maintaining accurate records of complaints and their outcomes.
- Ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and standards, including the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- Monitoring trends and identifying areas for improvement in complaint handling processes.

Service Delivery Partners:

10.3 Service Delivery Partners are required to promptly log and report any complaints received from residents to the Operations Team on behalf of DHL.

- Responsibilities of Service Delivery Partners include:
- Promptly forwarding complaints to the Operations Team with all

- relevant details and documentation.
- Collaborating with the Operations Team as necessary to assist in the investigation and resolution of complaints.
- Cooperating with any remedial actions or process improvements identified through the complaint handling process.

Complaint Lead

- 10.4 DHL has an appointed a Member Responsible for Complaints to provide independent oversight of the handling of complaints across DHL.

11. HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

- 11.1 Complaints can be made over the phone, in writing, in person, and online either by email or via our website. You do not have to address your issue as a complaint or put the word complaint in writing for it to be treated as a complaint.
- 11.2 Complaints can be made within 12 months of the issue occurring unless otherwise excluded on the ground mentioned above.

You can send your complaint to us in writing at DHL Limited, 124 City Road, EC1V 2NX. You can also contact us on by phone on 03300434541 and by email at complaints@dawson-housing.co.uk. Complaints can also be made via our website at www.dawson-housing.co.uk

12. REPORTING AND OVERSIGHT

- 12.1 To promote continuous improvement, accountability and transparency DHL will:
- Set KPI's to measure our performance in complaints handling across the organisations.
 - Produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report, including a self-assessment against the Complaints Handling Code.
 - Report complaints handling performance to the Board and publish the report on our website.

13. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 13.1 In writing this policy we have carried out assessment to ensure that we are considering, equality, diversity and inclusion. Our assessments did not indicate that any group had been adversely impacted by our approach to allocations.
- 13.2 We have also carried out a privacy impact assessment as information regarding applicants is sensitive. However, we will only share information in relation to a complaint in accordance to with the data protection act guidelines. We follow information sharing protocols with local authorities and our partner where they in place.
- 13.3 To request copies of these assessments, please contact enquiries@dawson-

14. RELATED INTERNAL POLICIES

- Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- ASB Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Subject Access request Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Tenancy Management Policy
- Allocations and letting Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

15. CONSULTATION

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed in consultation with residents, staff other key stakeholders.

16. REVIEW AND APPROVAL

- 16.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years or as required to take into account changes in legislation.

Board Lead for Complaints: Neil Thorneycroft