



# External Complaints Policy (Version 4.0)

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## 1. Introduction

Community Housing Limited Group of Companies (CHL) aims to provide a high standard of service in all areas of our operations. We recognise however that there will be occasions when customers, clients, applicants, tenants and other receiving services from us, providing services to us or significantly affected by CHL's operations may wish to comment on or complain about an aspect of our service. CHL appreciates any feedback that our clients choose to provide and aim to resolve any complaints in a timely manner.

A complaint is a registered expression of dissatisfaction with a service, lodged by a complainant or their representative. It must relate to a specific occurrence or episode, including the non-delivery of service, which has an impact in the individual complainant. It may be lodged in writing, over the telephone, or in person.

This Policy describes our overall arrangements for responding to comments and complaints. It is supported by detailed operational procedures. The policy and procedure applies to any person[s] who receives requests or provides a service from or to us, or is significantly affected by CHL.

## **2. Aim**

The aim of the policy is to ensure that:

- All comments on the standards of services are considered and where appropriate acted upon, with feedback provided to the person making the complaint.
- All complaints are dealt with in a timely manner within the prescribed timeframes and to the satisfaction of both the complainant and ourselves.
- Any improvements to our policies and procedures identified as a result of a comment or complaint are implemented.
- We perceive comments and complaints as an opportunity for positive action.

## **3. Principles of CHL Complaints Policy**

### **3.1. GENERAL**

CHL is committed to the efficient and fair resolution of complaints lodged by members of the public.

### **3.2. VISIBILITY**

Information on how to make a complaint will be available in the form of brochures located at all CHL offices and on the website [www.chl.org.au](http://www.chl.org.au) .

### **3.3. RESPONSIVENESS**

All Complaints will be dealt with courteously. We will aim to respond within specified timeframes. The current timeframes are detailed in Complaints Appendix 1

### **3.4. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Community Housing Ltd staff members shall respect the privacy of complainants and treat all documentation as confidential. A client's personal information will not be given to another person unless there is lawful reason to do so and/or with consent. Wherever possible we will respect the confidentiality of complainants and those being complained about. Where it is necessary to reveal the name, we will only do so with the individuals consent.

### **3.5. OBJECTIVITY**

To provide CHL clients the opportunity to have feedback received by CHL and any complaint to be reviewed in a fair and equitable way. To encourage continual improvement in operational policies and practices of CHL.

### **3.6. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The complaint handling process must follow due process and be just to all parties. All complaints will be dealt with fairly and professionally without consequence to the client or their status as a CHL customer.

### **3.7. RESOURCES**

CHL will provide appropriate training for all staff who have to deal with comments and complaints in the course of their duties.

### **3.8. ACCESSIBILITY**

We will, where necessary, assist those wishing to make a comment of complaint by arranging translation facilities or providing help for those with hearing or sight impairment. An advocate can assist a client during the complaints procedure.

The person making the complaint may advise CHL in writing if they wish to authorise a particular person to act on their behalf. The authority will include the advocate's name, contact number and relationship to the client.

### 3.9. APPEAL

The person making the complaint has the right to pursue a formal Appeal process if they are dissatisfied with the CHL complaints process and outcome. Any complaint received from a tenant or prospective tenant that fails to be resolved within the CHL Complaints Procedure process will be referred to the internal; Appeal process. Should the client still not be satisfied with the outcome of this process, they will be referred to an appropriate external Appeal Body for the State requirements in which CHL has operational presence. Additionally a list of agencies that may assist in resolving the complaint is detailed in 'Complaint Appendix 2'

### 3.10. STAFF

If a complaint involves investigations into staff conduct, the Disciplinary procedures may be applicable. In the case of complaints being made against the Managing Director, the Board of Management will undertake the investigation.

## 4. How CHL aims to achieve these policy principles

### 4.1. RESPONSIBILITY

The Manager of each business unit is responsible for ensuring this Policy is implemented. They must:

- ensure the *Complaints Procedure* is adhered to
- ensure that all complaints received are entered into the *CHL Client Feedback Register*

### 4.2. MONITORING

CHL will:

- Record and respond to all complaints received and ensure it is operating effectively and responding to changing needs and circumstances.
- make changes to policies and procedures if this is recommended as a result of a complaint. The approval of the CHL Board of Directors is required.

## 5. Related legislation, industry frameworks and standards, CHL policy and procedures

### 5.1. CHL RELATED POLICIES AND PROCESSES

Complaints Policy and Procedure
Disciplinary Action Policy
Disciplinary Action Procedure
Appeals Policy and Procedure
CHL Customer Promise

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