



Complaints Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the approach taken by Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) when dealing with dissatisfaction raised by a customer.

A complaint is 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.”

This applies to all customers who live in our properties or receive services provided by us. This includes tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, key workers, Care and Support, former customers, non-customers and new applicants.

How to make a complaint

Our centralised Customer Care Team, manage all complaints. You can contact our Customer Care Team, in a number of ways:

- **Phone** 020 3535 3535 (calls are charged at local rate)
- **Email** customercare@metropolitan.org.uk
- **Online** www.metropolitan.org.uk/feedback
- **In writing** MTVH Customer Care Team, Raleigh House, 68-84 Alfreton Road, Nottingham NG7 3NN

Approach

We are committed to using customer complaints to improve services and focus on their needs. Our key aims are to:

- We will look to resolve the complaint quickly and effectively with local resolution
- If we can't do this we will contact the customer, and a formal stage one complaint will be logged
- An acknowledgement of their complaint will be given within 5 working days of receipt which will include their named complaint handler
- We will investigate the complaint and where possible look to offer our customer a response within 10 working days. This will be when a resolution is agreed and MTVH commit to deliver the action
- If we can't respond within 10 working days, we will keep our customers informed, and agree new response times
- If our customer remains dissatisfied with our stage one response, they can make us aware of this and their complaint will be escalated to a formal stage two complaint
- An acknowledgement will be sent to our customer and confirmation will be given of their stage two complaint handler
- If we can't respond within 20 working days, we will keep our customers informed, and agree new response times



- Upon completion of MTVHs internal complaints process we will Inform our customers of their right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service if they believe their complaint has not been resolved satisfactory

Throughout our handling of complaints MTVH will empower our staff to make appropriate decisions, in line with our procedures and policies. Our first point of contact after a complaint is received is via telephone, we will however contact our customers by their preferred method of contact. All formal complaints are recorded to enable us to analyse all the data, to recognise reoccurring issues and themes, to ensure that learning is applied, and look to improve processes and polices where necessary.

Compensation

When making compensation payments we will:

- Ensure all compensation will be calculated in line with MTVHs internal compensation policy/tariff of payments
- A clear breakdown will be given to explain how the compensation has been calculated
- All payments will be fair and reasonable, and will be calculated on a case by case basis being mindful of any exceptional circumstances, including vulnerabilities and aggravated factors
- Our payments are classified as: Mandatory, Quantifiable Loss and Discretionary

Compensation will be offset against any arrears owed to MTVH by the customer. Any monies outstanding after arrears have been paid will be forwarded to the customer, by bank transfer.

After we have received our customers compensation acceptance, we aim to pay compensation within 28 days.

Non Payment of Compensation

MTVH will not consider compensation when:

- All statutory and contractual obligations have been fulfilled
- Loss or damage is caused by a third party not contracted to MTVH i.e. a family member of the customer or neighbour
- Access was unable to be gained to carry out a repair by a MTVH colleague/ contractor, or service failure is due to extreme weather conditions i.e. flooding
- Customers home contents are lost stolen or damaged through no fault of MTVH (customers are encouraged to have home insurance)
- MTVH do not have contractual responsibilities for repairs
- An incident has not been reported in a reasonable timescale
- Any loss or damage is due to unauthorised alterations to the property

Scope

In some circumstances we cannot consider a complaint, as it is excluded from the complaints process, this will be for one of the following reasons:

- The cause of the complaint occurred over six months ago.



- Legal proceedings have been started. All legal cases will override any active complaints, should legal proceedings occur during an active complaint case, the complaint case will be withdrawn.
- Matters that have already been considered under MTVHs complaints policy. An explanation will be provided upon receipt of a new complaint to explain the reason why this cannot be investigated, with customers next steps made clear. Customers have the right to challenge this decision by bringing their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service. Where appropriate the Housing Ombudsman Service will instruct MTVH to take on the complaint
- Any cases which are deemed to be an insurance claim, will be investigated by our insurance team, these will be exempt from our complaint process
- Complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are exempt from our complaints process as these are covered by our ASB policy, a complaint will be accepted if a customer is dissatisfied with how their ASB case is being handled
- Complaints about rent increases or the level of service charges or its reasonableness, are exempt from the complaints process, there are separate processes in which these disputes can be addressed. We will accept complaints if we fail to follow the processes associated with the management of services charges
- Planned Section 20 works are exempt from our complaints process, as they are covered under the legal process for section 20 works. Complaints will be investigated that look into MTVHs handling of these works, should a dissatisfaction arise

Legal/Regulatory Context

Further support and guidance can be found in the following places:

Support:

- Citizens Advice Bureau
03444 111444
citizensadvice.org.uk
- LEASE
www.lease-advice.org
- Shelter
0808 800 4444
shelter.org.uk

Guidance:

- Localism Act 2011
- Schedule 2 of Housing Act 1996
- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standards
- GDPR and DPA 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Ombudsman Scheme 2013

MTVH are members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme, they can be contacted for assistance on the details below:

- Online complaint form: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/
- Phone: 0300 111 3000



- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Postal address: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Equality and Diversity

MTVH work within the confines of our Equality & Diversity Policy, and ensure we are compliant with the Equalities Act 2010, and where necessary reasonable adjustments will be made. MTVH will apply fairness, accessibility and transparency, and are committed to promoting equality of opportunity to ensure all our residents are treated fairly.

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