

Complaints Policy

1 Purpose

This Policy sets out Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) approach when dealing with dissatisfaction raised by a customer.

2 Scope

The Policy and accompanying procedures apply to all customers who live in our properties and/or receive services provided by us.

This includes:

- Tenants,
- Leaseholders,
- Shared owners,
- Key workers,
- Care and Support,
- Former customers, non-customers and new applicants.

3 Our Approach

3.1 Definition

A Complaint is 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.

3.2 How we handle your complaint

MTVH is committed to using customer complaints to improve our services and focus on their needs.

Our first point of contact after a complaint is received is via telephone. However, going forward we will use our customers preferred method of contact.

When handling your complaint:

- We will look to resolve complaints quickly and effectively with a local resolution.
- If a local resolution isn't suitable, we will contact the customer and log a formal Stage One complaint.
- We will send an acknowledgment of the complaint within 5 working days of receipt and include, the complaint handler's name, contact details and reference.
- We will investigate and provide a resolution to our customer within 10 working days.
- If we cannot respond within 10 working days, we will keep our customer informed and agree new response times.
- If our customer remains dissatisfied with our Stage One response, they are able to raise this, and the complaint will be escalated to Stage Two.
- We will send an acknowledgment of the Stage Two complaint and include, the complaint handler's name, contact details and reference.



- A Stage Two complaint will only be reinvestigated when:
 - The response received at Stage One is factually incorrect (details of the inaccuracies to be provided by the customer)
 - The response received does not address the initial complaint
 - Important information provided in the initial complaint has not been considered
 - Actions agreed at Stage 1 have not been completed as agreed
- We will investigate and provide a resolution within 20 working days, if we can't respond within this timeframe, we will keep our customer informed and agree new response times.
- If the customer remains unhappy with our response, we will signpost to the Housing Ombudsman's and other organisation who can provide support.

All formal complaints are recorded to enable us to analyse the data, to recognise reoccurring issues and themes, to make sure that learning is applied, and look to improve procedures and policies where necessary.

3.3 What is excluded from the complaints process

In certain circumstances, we cannot consider a complaint as it is excluded. This will be for one of the following reasons:

- The cause of the complaint occurred over six months ago.
- Legal proceedings have started
- The complaint has already been handled under MTVH's Complaints Policy
- Insurance Claims
- Complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- Complaints about rent increases or service charges or their reasonableness
- Planned Section 20 works

5 Compensation

For further information, please see our Compensation Policy

4 Our responsibilities

MTVH will make sure our Customer Care Team (CCT) are fully trained on complaint handling and empower them to make the appropriate decisions in line with our Policies and Procedures.

The Customer Care Team will complete their duties independently and without bias. Each complaint is reviewed to make sure there are no conflicts of interest with the appointed handler. If a conflict is identified such as, the complaint involves the CCT Member or, the customer is known to them, the complaint will be transferred to another member of the regional team.

6 How to make a complaint and support

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@mtvh.co.uk
- **Online** www.metropolitan.org.uk/feedback



- **In writing** MTVH Customer Care Team, Raleigh House, 68-84 Alfreton Road, Nottingham NG7 3NN

For further support and guidance regarding your complaint, see the table below

Organisation	Contact Details
Citizens Advice Bureau	Tel: 03444 111444 Website: citizensadvice.org.uk
LEASE	www.lease-advice.org
Shelter	Tel: 0808 800 4444 Website: shelter.org.uk
Housing Ombudsman Scheme	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

7 Legal/Regulatory Context

- 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

8 Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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.

9 Key Policy Information

Procedure Owner	Director of Central Customer Services
Author	Policy Team
Approved by	Customer Services SLT
Effective from	DATE 23/02/2021
Approach to review	This Policy & associated Procedures will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if legislation, regulatory changes or operational need require an earlier review. Any amendments will be appropriately consulted on and signed off before being clearly communicated to customers and colleagues.
Latest next review date	3 YEARS AFTER EFFECTIVE DATE