Complaints Policy

Introduction

IMPAKT housing & support treats complaints very seriously. We will respond to complaints, whether formal or informal, in a positive and constructive way to ensure that they are dealt with promptly and satisfactorily. We will use complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve our services, and we are committed to ensuring that no complainant is subject to any reprisal for making a complaint.

This policy has two main functions:

- To provide dissatisfied individuals (Service Users or Visitors) with a mechanism for seeking redress
- To audit and check our own performance and provide feedback to see how we can improve and maintain our services and relationship with the residents and the public.

For housing specific complaints, please see ***IHS-HOU-009-21*** – *Housing Complaints Policy*.

Definition

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 groups of residents'; Service Users do not need to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Any complaints made on behalf of the Service User, by a third party or representative, will be treated the same as a complaint made by the Service User themselves

A service request is a request from a Service User for action to be taken to put something right and is not a complaint. However, a complaint can be raised following any dissatisfaction following a service request. An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, although Service Users are able to pursue a complaint raised within surveys.

Complaints Process

If you are unhappy with any part of the services provided, please speak to a relevant member of staff, if you feel able to. We will endeavour to rectify the issue at this point but will advise you on how to make a complaint if you remain unsatisfied.

We have a Complaints Form (***IHS-GOV-022*** – *Complaints Form*) available upon request but also accept complaints via any other methods. If you need any assistance or reasonable adjustments to make a complaint, please let a member of staff know and we will accommodate this.

You can request to be represented or accompanied by someone else at any stage of your complaint. If you would like to be represented, we would need your permission to share personal details relating to the complaint with your chosen representative

Any complaints regarding third parties / contractors working for / on behalf of IMPAKT Housing & Support can be reported to us via this process. We will then raise the complaint with them and respond to you as per this policy, endeavouring to keep to the 10 / 20 working days response time.

Stage 1

1. We will acknowledge, define, and log your complaint **within 5 working days of its receipt**. Your complaint will be sent to the relevant person who is not involved with the complaint you are making
2. We will issue a full response to the complaint once we have an answer and **within 10 working days of acknowledgement**. If there are outstanding actions to resolve the complaint, we will action these promptly and provide updates to you on progress.
3. If your complaint is complex, we may need extra time to review it and respond. If we need to extend these timescales, we will inform you of how long it will be until you have a response, with an extension of **no more than 10 working days**.
4. If you have any additional complaints during this stage, they will either be:
    a. Incorporated into the Stage 1 response, if they are related and no response has been issued yet
    b. Logged as a new complaint, if they are unrelated, the response has been issued, or it would unreasonably delay the response to the original complaint
5. Our response to your complaint will include, in plain language:
    a. The complaint stage
    b. The complaint definition
    c. Which aspects of the complaint we are / are not responsible for
    d. The decision made on the complaint
    e. The reason for the decision made
    f. The details of any remedials to the complaint
    g. The details of any outstanding actions and expected timeframes
    h. The details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if you are not satisfied with our response

We hope that your complaint will be resolved to your satisfaction during Stage 1 and will close it in our logs if so.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied following our Stage 1 response, we will progress your complaint to Stage 2.

1. We will acknowledge, define, and log requests for a Stage 2 response **within 5 working days of receipt of the escalation request**. You will not be required to provide a reason for requesting a Stage 2 response, but we will make reasonable efforts to understand why you are not satisfied with our Stage 1 response.
2. We will issue a final response to your complaint **within 20 working days of acknowledgement**. Stage 2 responses will be reviewed and responded to by the Director of Housing, unless they reviewed your complaint in Stage 1. If there are outstanding actions to resolve the complaint, we will action these promptly and provide updates to you on progress.
3. If your complaint is complex, we may need extra time to review it and respond. If we need to extend these timescales, we will inform you of how long it will be until you have a response, with an extension of no more than 20 working days. We will also provide you with the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman.
4. Our response to your complaint will include, in plain language:
    a. The complaint stage
    b. The complaint definition
    c. Which aspects of the complaint we are / are not responsible for
    d. The decision made on the complaint

e. The reason for the decision made
f. The details of any remedials to the complaint
g. The details of any outstanding actions and expected timeframes

Stage 2 is our final response to the complaint.

Exclusions

We will always endeavour to accept and respond to every complaint we receive. However, we may refuse a complaint in situations where:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over 12 months ago
- Legal proceedings have begun
- The complaint is on matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy

We will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint before we make a decision and apply discretion where needed. If we do not accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation on the reasons for this decision

Our Obligations

During the complaints process we will:

- Deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind
- Give Service Users a fair chance to explain their complaint
- Carefully review all evidence and information to make a fully informed decision
- Ensure there are no conflicts of interest in the process
- Be accountable and transparent throughout the whole process
- Keep a full record of every complaint, including details, dates, all correspondence, and any supporting documentation
- Ensure there are no reprisals against any complainants for the complaint they have made
- Make visible this policy and information regarding how to raise complaints, and encourage Service Users to use it when things have gone wrong
- Make reasonable adjustments for Service Users under the Equality Act 2010 and keep a record of the adjustments and any disabilities disclosed
- Not refuse to escalate a complaint without valid reason (as set out in 'Exclusions')
- Acknowledge and remedy any situation where something has gone wrong
- Regularly review complaints received and use them to improve our services

Contact Details

Department	Contact
DART (Bedfordshire)	DARTreferrals@impakt.org.uk
DASS (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough)	DASSreferrals@impakt.org.uk
DAST (Hertfordshire)	DASTreferrals@impakt.org.uk
Food / Retail	Jodie.newman@impakt.org.uk
General	admin@impakt.org.uk