

# Policy

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Translations available on request by phoning 0303 333 0101 or via email at [info@haltonhousing.org](mailto:info@haltonhousing.org)

যদি আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 0303 333 0101 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

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## Introduction

Halton Housing is committed to continually improving the services we provide to Customers. We therefore welcome any views or feedback on service delivery, whether good or bad.

Enquiries, complaints, and compliments are a valuable source of feedback, which helps Halton Housing to improve and provide better services.

The process of registering an enquiry, complaint or compliment is collectively referred to as 'Talk to Us'.

## Policy Statement

Halton Housing has developed a Talk to Us Procedure and Leaflet to support this policy which is designed to be accessible, fair to customers and easy to understand.

In implementing this Policy, we will have due regard to any relevant regulatory standards, as well as its own policies on Diversity and Customer Care.

## Our Standards

When you talk to us, we promise we will:

- Keep you informed at all stages; we will agree how you want to be contacted
- Aim to resolve your complaint as effectively as possible
- Provide you with a clear explanation of how your complaint will be dealt with
- Keep to the set timescales as outlined in the procedure
- Ensure the complaint is dealt with in accordance with the Protection & Retention Policy

## General enquiries and comments are defined as:

Customers requesting a service for the first time or requesting general information. General enquiries are not formal enquiries or complaints, and are often commonly referred to as 'first requests for service'

## Formal enquiries are defined as:

Enquiries received from local MP's, Elected Members, Board Members or independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party advocates. Customers who wish to make a formal enquiry about any aspect of Halton Housing services will have made contact via one of these routes.

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## **Informal complaints are defined as:**

Expressions of minor dissatisfaction or minor failure in service which can be quickly rectified. Informal complaints either do not warrant a full investigation, or the customer specifically states they do not wish to take the matter any further through the complaint's procedure. When you complain to us, we will try to resolve the problem when we first contact you and agree with what happens next, and this should happen within 5 days of you contacting us.

## **Formal complaints are defined as:**

Failure in service which warrants an investigation, or when customers specifically state they wish to log a formal complaint. Formal complaints have 2 stages which are detailed in the Talk to Us Procedure.

If the customer believes that their complaint has not been fully investigated and resolved, they have the right to request to proceed to stage 2 of the process. The customer must clearly state what part of the Stage 1 response letter is being challenged and why. The Stage 2 request must be made within 20 working days of the Stage 1 response letter being sent to the customer.

If, after exhausting our complaints procedure, a customer feels we have not fully investigated or resolved their complaint in full, they have the right to complain to a Designated Person (as defined in the Localism Act 2011), or directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Designated Persons were introduced as part of the 2011 Localism Act. They can be a MP, local Councillor or recognised Tenants Panel.

Following Customer consultation, Halton Housing has not formed a Tenants Panel in a Designated Person capacity. Halton Housing Customers can use any local MP or Councillor as a Designated Person, should they wish to. More details of the role of a Designated Person can be found on the Housing Ombudsman website <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

If Customers prefer not to use a Designated Person, and instead wish to refer their complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman, they can do so providing it is done at least 8 weeks from the end of the complaint process and a maximum of 6 months of receiving the final decision from Halton Housing.

Halton Housing Chief Executive will be informed of any customers who have indicated that they are intending to, or have, approached the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).

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## Continuous Improvement

In order to continually improve our services, learning outcomes will be sought after each complaint is closed.

Customer Satisfaction will be sought via telephone or postal survey for all closed complaints. Satisfaction is conducted on the complaint process rather than the complaint outcome.

Complaint performance will be closely monitored, and shared with respective service areas, and the Halton Housings Leadership Team.

Performance will be measured on Covalent Balance Scorecard Indicators and high-level performance indicators will be taken to Customer Forum bi-monthly.

## Regulatory and/or Legal Compliance

This policy complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard' which states:

*"Registered providers shall.... have an approach to complaints that is clear, simple and accessible that ensures that complaints are resolved promptly, politely and fairly".*

Halton Housing will continue to be mindful of and look to comply with the requirements of this and any other related standard as it implements this Policy.

## Diversity Considerations

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Talk to Us Policy, Procedure and Leaflet. It concluded that:

- The Policy is not directly or indirectly discriminatory

## Links to Strategies, Procedures and Associated Documents

The Talk to Us Policy is an operational policy overarching all services provided by Halton Housing.

The following documents are linked to this Policy.

- Talk to Us Procedure and leaflet
- Asset Management Strategy
- Compensation Policy
- Customer Code of Conduct

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- Employee Code of Conduct
  - Equality & Diversity in Employment Policy
  - Absence Management Policy
  - Adaptations Policy
  - Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy
  - Customer Engagement Policy
  - Data Protection Policy
  - Domestic Abuse Policy
  - Learning and Development Policy
  - Property Pool Plus (Allocations) Policy
  - Rent Collection, Payments and Debt Recovery Policy
  - Diversity Policy
  - Single Equality Scheme
  - Customer Engagement Policy
  - Use of Warning Markers Policy
  - Repairs Policy
  - Vexatious Customer Procedure
  - Translation & Interpretation Services – Briefing Note