

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

Background

Manningham Housing Association (MHA) is a registered social housing provider. The Association provides general needs, sheltered and supported housing for rent and shared ownership. MHA provides housing for people in need in a way that leads to sustainable and balanced communities where people want to live, work and play.

Our mission is to empower communities to be successful and vibrant. We focus on quality, making a difference and fairness in the way we provide housing services in the communities we serve.

This policy sets out how we will work towards ensuring our homes are prosperous places and cohesive neighbourhoods. We have taken account of the following legislation and publications:

- The Consumer Protection Act 1987
- The British Standard for Complaint Management (BSI 1999 / BS8600)
- Housing Corporation: Communities in Control (2000)
- Housing Corporation: (How) Are You Being Served? A Good Practice Guide on Complaints Handling in Housing Associations (2002)

We are aware that the new regulator of tenant services is the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). The TSA will in due time publish their own standards to replace Housing Corporation standards.

Complaints Gateway

We aim to achieve complete customer satisfaction in every aspect of service, by getting things right first time. Where we fail to achieve this, we are happy to consider every complaint objectively and thoroughly in order to ensure continuous improvement, as well as to comply with any statutory requirements. We will identify any possible remedial action to prevent a re-occurrence of the complaints that we deal with.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of our service or the conduct of our staff and contractors by our customers that they wish the Association to investigate and rectify. It is best for complaints to be made as soon as possible. We reserve the right not to accept complaints made when the action complained about is long past (for instance, over 28 working days), or the staff or contractor complained about is no longer employed by us.

We have a dedicated member of the housing staff to investigate all complaints. The name of the staff will be given to customers if required. The staff will act as the Association's "complaints champion" to ensure that all complaints are dealt with using a "one stop" approach in order to minimise delays in responding to complaints. The Association's switchboard number will be used as the direct telephone number for complaints. The number is (01274) 771144. The fax number is 01274 401807. The Complaints Officer can be contacted by e-mail: [complaints@manninghamha.co.uk](mailto:complaints@manninghamha.co.uk).

However, tenants with complaints against their neighbour must contact their Housing Officer. Neighbour complaints and disputes are handled separately from customer service complaints.

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

We welcome all service complaints, including **anonymous** complaints, in the following categories:

- Complaints from tenants and applicants relating to our housing services or the Association's business more widely;
- Complaints from individuals who are unhappy with:
  - i. any services provided by the association;
  - ii. the way requests for information have been handled;
  - iii. the way staff or other representatives have conducted themselves;
  - iv. the way housing applications have been handled.

Complaints can be made using the forms attached at Appendix 1 to 3. Alternatively, complaints can be made by letter, electronic mail, and by telephone. Where applicable, such complaints may be transferred by staff to the Association's complaints form for effective resolution and monitoring purposes. In such instances, staff will advise the complainant and ensure they are happy with their complaints being transferred to the Association's complaints form.

In all cases, we will advise complainants, especially our tenants that they have a right to lodge complaints of discrimination in the County Court on grounds of race or gender, protection under the Harassment Act 1997 and other applicable anti-discrimination legislation.

#### Dealing with Complaints

We will treat all complaints with seriousness. Complaints can be received by any officer of the Association verbally and in writing. We will deal with minor complaints on the spot, where applicable. We will deal with complaints by post, or over the telephone, if the complainant includes their telephone number. Staff will make a note of the complaint on our files and any action that needs to be taken will be identified. We will acknowledge complaints **within seven working days** of their receipt and advise the complainant of the steps we will take to rectify the situation, if applicable. A copy of this policy will be included.

We aim to resolve all complaints **within twenty-eight working days**, following acknowledgement. In all cases, it is the Association's Complaints Officer, or the staff covering in their absence that will acknowledge the complaint and follow up any required remedial action within the Association. If the complaint is anonymous, we will ensure appropriate action is taken and notify the Senior Management Team of any outcomes.

#### Investigations

We will carry out investigations using the following mechanisms:

- i. In the first instance, the relevant officer will be required to give their own side of the story in writing, including providing evidence or witnesses, where applicable.
- ii. The Complaints Officer will critically assess this account in the light of the complaint received. Additional evidence and witnesses may be required by the Complaints Officer. The Complaints Officer will ensure that the Director of Housing is kept informed for appropriate oversight of the investigation process, including decision on findings and possible remedial action.

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

- iii. A meeting will then be arranged by the Complaints Officer with the complainant to feedback to them the Association's findings and what remedial action will be taken, if applicable. Following the meeting, the Complaints Officer will put the findings in writing, including the outcomes of their feedback meeting and forward to the complainant, ensuring that the Director of Housing is kept informed for appropriate oversight and advice . A copy of this policy will be included in the correspondence.
- iv. If the complainant is not satisfied, they can appeal and this will be dealt with at Appeal Stage 1 by the Chief Executive. The Stage 1 Appeal Hearing will take place within 14 working days of receiving the completed Appeal Form Stage 1.
- v. Appeal Stage 1 may include additional meetings with the complainant and any relevant officers to ensure that any other relevant information is obtained before concluding the Stage 1 Appeal process.
- vi. The Stage 1 Appeal process will be concluded within 28 working days of receiving the completed Appeal Form Stage 1.
- vii. The Stage 1 Appeal outcome will be communicated to the complainant by the Complaints Officer. If the complainant is not satisfied, they can appeal and this will be dealt with at Appeal Stage 2 by a panel of the Association's Board of Management.
- viii. The Stage 2 Appeal Panel will be set up by the Chair of the Association and will consist of at least two members of the Association's Board, including at least one tenant Board member.
- ix. The Stage 2 Appeal Hearing will take place within 28 working days of receiving the completed Appeal Form Stage 2.
- x. At Appeal Stage 2 further investigative meetings with the complainant and any relevant officers can be made to ensure that any other relevant information is obtained before concluding the Stage 2 Appeal process.
- xi. The Stage 2 Appeal process will be concluded within 14 working days of the Stage 2 Appeal Hearing.
- xii. The Stage 2 Appeal outcome will be communicated to the complainant by the Personal Assistant to the Chief Executive. If the complainant is not satisfied, they can appeal to the Housing Ombudsman.

#### Compensation

In some instances, we may compensate complainants for service failure. We will take legal advice, if applicable, before proposing any compensation.

#### Learning from Complaints

We will ensure that we use the outcome of resolving complaints to further improve our service delivery. A specific section of our Complaints Procedure requires staff to identify outcomes that the Association can use to further improve service delivery.

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

Appeals

If a complainant is not satisfied with the resolution of their complaint, they can appeal in writing **within fourteen working days** of receiving the Association's letter notifying them of the outcome of their complaint. They should send their appeal to the Complaints Officer.

The Association reserves the right not to allow any appeal received outside the fourteen working days' timescale. Moreover, once a complaint has been concluded to the satisfaction of the complainant, the Association reserves the right to close the case permanently.

Referral to the Housing Ombudsman

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Stage 2 process, then they can appeal to the Housing Service Ombudsman. Their contact details are as follows:

The Evaluation Officer  
Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
LONDON  
WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 020 7836 3630)  
Fax: 020 7836 3900  
Lo-call: 0845 7125 973  
E-mail: [ombudsman@ihos.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ihos.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ihos.org.uk](http://www.ihos.org.uk)

Monitoring and Review

We will monitor and review this policy in conjunction with residents to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the Association's stated aims and objectives.

The Director of Housing has overall responsibility for the on-going monitoring of the policy through the work of frontline staff, particularly those engaged in resident involvement directly. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Director of Housing.

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY APPENDIX 1**  
**Manningham Housing Association**  
**COMPLAINTS FORM**

**Please complete this form to let us know what you are unhappy about. Please write clearly and feel free to use additional sheets.**

1. Tell us in your own words what you are unhappy with about our service, staff or contractor:

2. What do you want Manningham Housing to do to resolve your complaint?

Please note that we will investigate your complaint and our findings will determine what we can do to resolve your complaint. Also, please note that you have a right to lodge complaints of discrimination in the County Court on grounds of race or gender, protection under the Harassment Act 1997 and other applicable anti-discrimination legislation.

Your Name in Full:

Your Address in Full:

Your Telephone Number (including the area code):

Your Mobile Telephone Number:

Your Signature:

Today's Date:

**It is best for complaints to be made as soon as possible. We reserve the right not to accept complaints made when the action complained about is long past (for instance, over 28 working days), or the staff or contractor complained about is no longer employed by us.**

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY APPENDIX 2**  
**Manningham Housing Association**  
**COMPLAINTS FORM – APPEAL STAGE 1**

**Please complete this form to let us know why you are unhappy with the decision you have received regarding your complaint. Please write clearly and feel free to use additional sheets.**

1. Tell us in your own words what you are unhappy with about the decision the Association made regarding your complaint(s):

2. What do you want the Association to do to resolve your complaint?

Please note that the Chief Executive will hear this appeal. The appeal findings will determine what we can do to resolve your complaint. Also, please note that you have a right to lodge complaints of discrimination in the County Court on grounds of race or gender, protection under the Harassment Act 1997 and other applicable anti-discrimination legislation.

Your Name in Full:

Your Address in Full:

Your Telephone Number (including the area code):

Your Mobile Telephone Number:

Your Signature:

Today's Date:

**Your Appeal Form must reach us by ..... We reserve the right not to accept your appeal request if your completed form is not received by this date. Thank you for your cooperation.**

Manningham Housing Association  
**Complaints Policy**  
**DRAFT**

**COMPLAINTS POLICY APPENDIX 3**  
**Manningham Housing Association**  
**COMPLAINTS FORM – APPEAL STAGE 2**

**Please complete this form to let us know why you are unhappy with the Appeal Stage 1 decision you have received regarding your complaint. Please write clearly and feel free to use additional sheets.**

3. Tell us in your own words what you are unhappy with about the decision the Association made regarding your complaint(s):

4. What do you want the Association to do to resolve your complaint?

Please note that the Chair of Manningham Housing Association will set up an appeal panel consisting of two members of the Board to hear your appeal. The appeal findings will determine what we can do to resolve your complaint. Also, please note that you have a right to lodge complaints of discrimination in the County Court on grounds of race or gender, protection under the Harassment Act 1997 and other applicable anti-discrimination legislation.

Your Name in Full:

Your Address in Full:

Your Telephone Number (including the area code):

Your Mobile Telephone Number:

Your Signature:

Today's Date:

**Your Appeal Form must reach us by ..... We reserve the right not to accept your appeal request if your completed form is not received by this date. Thank you for your cooperation.**