



Pinnacle Spaces

Complaints Policy

Recharge Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Pinnacle Spaces welcomes customer feedback about its services and staff, and we have a process for service users to express their views and opinions.
- 1.2 We will ensure that everyone is treated fairly and consistently in expressing those views and opinions, and we take into account equality and diversity issues.
- 1.3 We will also ensure that a customer's concerns are taken seriously, and that they receive a timely response and an explanation of how any decision was reached.
- 1.4 All complaints and outcomes will be recorded and complaints and outcomes will help us to monitor our performance; to learn lessons for the future; and to inform and shape service delivery.

2 Our vision

- 2.1 To put our customers at the heart of complaints management and to use complaints as a learning opportunity to improve services

3 Equal access for all

- 3.1 We value and celebrate that diversity, and we believe it is essential that everyone has easy access to the complaints process.

4 Our definition of a complaint

- 4.1 'Any expression of dissatisfaction with our staff or the services that we deliver (including partners and contractors, acting on our behalf)

What is a complaint?

- 4.2 A complaint is that we:

- Have made a mistake or have done something
- wrong Have promised to do something but failed
- to do so
- Have been impolite or unhelpful (this includes staff and contractors) Have failed or delayed in carrying out a service

What is not a complaint?

- 4.3 We would not treat the following as a complaint and we would not consider them under our complaints process:
- The first request for a service or where we have been given insufficient time to deliver that service according to our agreed response times
 - A request for information or a service
 - An explanation of, or challenge to, a policy or procedure
 - An appeal against a decision, such as housing benefit and parking allocation
 - A complaint about another resident, as part of a neighbour dispute for example
 - Where legal action is in progress. However, if a solicitor is acting as an advocate for a customer, this will be logged as a complaint and it will be dealt with in the usual way
 - Insurance claims
- 4.4 This list is not exhaustive, but we can only deal with complaints about services that we provide or that contractors provide on our behalf

5 When can a complaint be made?

- 5.1 Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the customer thinks that something has gone wrong, as there is then a better opportunity for us to carry out a thorough investigation. The more time that goes by people may not be able to recollect the exact events; officers who were involved may have left the Council; and, on some occasions, records might not be available.
- 5.2 For these reasons, Pinnacle Spaces will normally only investigate a complaint about things that have happened within the last 12 months unless they were previously brought to its attention. Of course, there will be exceptions to this, such as when something might have prevented the customer from reporting the complaint earlier.

6 Our complaints process

- 6.1 Pinnacle Spaces has three stages to its complaints process. Where a customer is formally complaining about an issue for the first time, their complaint will normally be investigated at stage 1 of our procedure. We will let you know if we are going to deal with your complaint in a different way.
- 6.2 At each stage the complaint will be investigated by a different person.
- 6.3 Our complaint acknowledgement will contain the Pinnacle Spaces contact details in case the customer wishes to speak to someone about their complaint.

Stage 1

- 6.4 The service manager will ensure that the complaint is recorded on the Pinnacle Spaces computerised system for recording feedback. The manager will also send the customer an acknowledgement letter within five working days, advising them that we have received their complaint. The acknowledgement

letter will give the name of the officer who will be investigating the complaint and a date by which the customer will receive a written response.

- 6.5 The service manager responsible for the service that is the subject of the complaint will investigate the complaint and write to the customer within 10 working days, advising them of the outcome of their investigation.

- 6.6 If the complaint is about the service manager, the complaint will be investigated, and a response sent, by their line manager.

- 6.7 The service manager's letter will explain to the customer:

- The decision on the complaint and how that decision was reached
- Any action that Pinnacle Spaces will take as a result of the complaint
- How the customer can escalate their complaint if they are unhappy with the decision.

Stage 2

- 6.8 If a customer is unhappy with the response to their complaint at stage 1, and they wish to escalate it, they must write to the Contract Manager explaining why they remain dissatisfied.

- 6.9 All stage 2 complaints will be recorded on the Pinnacle Spaces computerised system for recording feedback, and an acknowledgement letter sent within two working days advising receipt of the complaint. The acknowledgement letter will give the name of the officer who will be investigating the complaint and a date by which the customer will receive a full written response.

- 6.10 The Contract Manager is responsible for carrying out a new investigation, and they will write to the customer within 20 working days of receiving the complaint explaining:

- Their decision and the reasons for that decision
- Any action that will be taken by Pinnacle Spaces as a result of the complaint
- That the customer can escalate their complaint to stage 3 of the complaints procedure by writing to the Housing Ombudsman.

Stage 3

- 6.11 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) investigates all stage 3 complaints with some exceptions (see section 7.1)
- 6.12 The HO will send the customer an acknowledgement letter within two working days, advising them that she has received their complaint. The acknowledgement letter will give a date by which the customer will receive a written response.
- 6.13 The HO is responsible for carrying out a new investigation, and she will write to the customer within 30 working days of receiving the complaint explaining:
- Their decision on the complaint and the reasons for that
 - decision Any action that HO has asked Pinnacle Spaces to take as a result of her findings on the complaint
 - How to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman Service if they remain unhappy.
- 6.14 In some instances, Pinnacle Spaces asks the HO to take a complaint even though it has not been investigated at each stage of the complaints process. The HO will consider the complaint and the reasons for the request, and HO will make a decision on whether to agree to it or turn it down because HO thinks that her involvement is premature: the HO looks at each case on its merits. The complainant is not usually consulted on this, and their agreement is not required.

Timescales

- 6.15 If a complaint is complex, it may take a longer time to reply at any of the three stages. The officer carrying out the investigation will let the customer know of any delay and they will give a new date for reply.

What happens if the customer remains unhappy?

- 6.16 If, after exhausting the Pinnacle Spaces complaints process, the customer remains dissatisfied, they can ask the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) or the Housing Ombudsman Service to investigate their case (HOS). They will let us know their findings.

- 6.17 The LGO can be contacted at:

PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

- 6.18 The HOS can be contacted at:

81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Website: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

7 Complaints that fall outside the complaints procedure

7.1 There are special procedures for investigating some complaints and complaints falling under these procedures cannot be dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure. There are other complaints where the customer can appeal, and again this would exclude them from the Pinnacle Spaces process.

7.2 If a customer sends us a complaint that should be dealt with under another procedure or by way of appeal, we will write to let them know this and explain how to access that procedure or appeal. If a customer is unsure as to whether a complaint falls under a different procedure or they can appeal, they can contact the Property Manager.

7.3 The following complaints fall under special procedures and they cannot be dealt with under the Pinnacle Spaces Corporate Complaints Procedure:

- Complaints about social care services for children and young people
- Complaints about adult social care services
- Complaints about breach of the Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act
- Complaints involving insurance claims
- Complaints about personnel matters
- Complaints alleging fraud in, for example, housing and council tax benefit

8 Dealing with unreasonably persistent complainants

8.1 In most cases, complaints can be dealt with quickly and efficiently. However, the behaviour of a minority of customers can make investigating and resolving a complaint difficult. These customers can also take up a lot of officer time so there is less time to help others. These cases will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

9 Learning from complaints

9.1 Pinnacle Spaces puts customers at the heart of its complaints process; it has a customer focussed approach to complaints handling; and it ensures that lessons are learnt from complaints.

10 Confidentiality

- 10.1 Anyone involved in handling a complaint, at any level, has a duty to comply with this procedure and to ensure information on the complaint is kept confidential at all times.
- 10.2 All officers and managers are required to handle complaints according to the rules of data protection.

11 Representation

- 11.1 Customers can ask for a third party to act on their behalf. If it is a friend, a relative or an advocate, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, we require written authorisation from the customer allowing us to liaise with the representative and before we release any information about the complaint.
- 11.2 Customers can ask their MP and/or Ward Councillor to act on their behalf: written authorisation would not be required here.

12 Dealing with compliments

- 12.1 Compliments received should be recorded on the Pinnacle Spaces computerised system for recording feedback.
- 12.2 The Contract Manager should write to the customer within 10 working days thanking them for their compliment.
- 12.3 If a member of staff is complimented, the Contract Manager should bring this to their attention.