

Complaints Policy

Pinnacle Affordable Homes (“PAF”)



1. Scope

This policy sets out PAF’s approach to managing complaints.

This policy applies to all PAF residents and any individual or group affected by the services PAF provides.

2. Aims and Objectives

PAF aims to provide a good and reliable service to all its clients and to treat all feedback as a learning opportunity to improve services.

PAF is committed to responding promptly and courteously to all expressions of dissatisfaction and delivering a high standard of service to ensure that actions are carried out as quickly as possible and that communication is timely and accurate.

3. Key terms and definitions

We define a complaint 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 group of residents.

The word ‘complaint’ does not have to be used for it to be treated as such. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will be handled in line with the complaints policy.

4. Policy

PAF positively welcomes feedback in the form of complaints from anyone who is affected by a service we provide or decision taken by us including:

- Residents named on a PAF tenancy for any of our properties.
- Any third party adversely affected by our actions or decisions
- Any person acting on behalf of a resident with their consent for example a family member, neighbour, advice agency, member of parliament, councillor or the Housing Ombudsman.

A complaint may be also made in the form of a petition. The complaint will be dealt with following the normal complaints procedure, on the address of the first signatory only. The petition will be treated as one complaint and all correspondence will be addressed to the first signatory. If the complaint reaches stage two of our complaints process and a panel meeting is convened, the first signatory may attend the complaints panel with one other signatory. Details of the outcome of the complaint will be copied to each signatory on the petition once it has been resolved.

When an expression of dissatisfaction is received, we would first look to resolve the matter locally via our Customer Service Department or by the relevant Contract Manager.

If this approach has not reached the desired resolution, or it is deemed inappropriate, it can be registered and dealt with as a formal complaint.

Our complaints process is comprised of two stages. Stage one will be an investigation carried out by a case manager. If the complaint is escalated to stage two, an independent review will be carried out by a Contract Manager or Head of Service. Please refer to the Complaints Procedure for further details on how this process works.

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

Complaints can be reported in different ways. These are by telephone, in person, in writing by letter or by email. Full details of the ways to contact us are detailed on our website.

In order that complaints can be investigated effectively, all complaints should be submitted to PAF within six months of when the event occurred, or it became known to the complainant. PAF may exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances when considering whether to accept a complaint submitted outside of this timescale.

Confidentiality and data protection apply to the complaints process; PAF will not share personal, or property information gathered as part of the complaint investigation with any third party who is not entitled to receive it, in line with data protection legislation.

There are some things that we will not deal with through our complaint's procedure. These include

- The first request for a service or where we have been given insufficient time to deliver that service according to our service standards
- A general request for information or a service
- An explanation of, or challenge to, a PAF policy or procedure; although we can look at how that policy or procedure has been applied
- Any matter that can be appealed to an outside body, so for example, the Housing Benefit Tribunal, the Planning Inspectorate and the Parking Adjudicators.
- A challenge to a PAF decision, although we can look at how that decision was reached
- 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

In cases where legal action is in progress, instigated either by the complainant or the landlord, separate consideration will be given as to whether a formal complaint will be raised.

Complaints about a service provided by an external provider will be considered dependent upon the contractual relationship of the external provider and PAF.

Any dissatisfaction raised concerning PAF policies, procedures or responsibilities will not be raised as a complaint but will be used as feedback to consider when the relevant policy, procedure or responsibility are due for review.

A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the resident or representative thinks that something has gone wrong, as this gives us the best chance to find out what happened. The more time passes, the harder it is to recollect the exact events; staff who were involved might have left PAF, and on occasions records might not be available.

For these reasons, PAF will normally only investigate a complaint about things that have happened within the last 6 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.

5. Monitoring, reporting and continuous improvement

This policy will be reviewed every year – unless legislation, business or sector developments require to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and take account of good practice developments.

PAF will publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints.

6. Complain to a Regulatory Body

Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you have the right to take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman at the below address:

The Housing Ombudsman
Housing Ombudsman Services
PO Box 152
Liverpool L33 7WQ

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

Web: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Please be aware that you have up to 12 months from the date you receive our final response to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman in writing, although it is preferable that you do so as soon as possible if you wish to pursue your complaint further.