

4.6 Complaints



Preamble

Women's Housing Company is a not for profit housing association as part of the social housing system in NSW. Women's Housing Company provides long term housing for single women and medium term housing through support partnerships. Tenure is linked to remaining eligible according to Women's Housing Company criteria and specific program guidelines. Some programs have strict income levels to qualify.

Women's Housing Company abides by relevant legislation such as the [NSW Residential Tenancies Act 2010](#), the [NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977](#), and the [Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998](#).

Women's Housing Company adheres to guidelines and policies such as set out by the [Community Housing Division HNSW](#) and the [National Community Housing Standards](#). Women's Housing Company workers abide by a Code of Ethical Conduct.

Women's Housing Company aims to be transparent in its decisions and to act in a fair manner at all times.

Women's Housing Company recognises that best practice service requires regular monitoring, evaluation, review and improvements and that tenant input and feedback is crucial to this.

POLICY

Women's Housing Company strongly encourages feedback on its services. This includes feedback on areas where Women's Housing Company can improve its service or where the service that it has provided is not adequate.

Tenants, applicants and other stakeholders who are dissatisfied with the services, practices or policies of Women's Housing Company are encouraged to provide feedback in the form of a complaint. Complaints may be raised informally with the staff member/team or lodged formally with the Operations Manager or Chief Executive Officer. Women's Housing Company commits to responding to complaints in a timely manner and in a manner appropriate to the form of the complaint (i.e., complaints lodged in writing will be responded to in writing).

Complaints that are not adequately resolved following formal lodgement with Women's Housing Company are encouraged to be raised with external agencies such as the [Registrar of Community Housing](#), the [Community Housing Division HNSW](#), the [NSW Federation of Housing Associations](#), Local Member of Parliaments or the [Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal](#).

Note: Complaints are distinguished from Appeals in that a complaint is regarding the service provide not being satisfactory whereas an appeal should be lodged when the tenant/applicant/other stakeholder is not happy with a decision made by Women's Housing Company; appeals are to be dealt with as per [4.7 Appeals](#).

Date developed: 31/1/2005 (renamed "Complaints" 31/10/11)

Date/s policy was ratified and/or changed by Board: 31/1/05; 28/8/07; 31/10/11

Date/s policy/procedure was reviewed & implemented: 31/01/05; 28/08/07; 31/10/11

PROCEDURE

Tenants, applicants, and other stakeholders are encouraged to raise complaints directly with the staff member/team involved where possible. The issue of concern will be assessed by the staff member receiving the complaint with a response provided within 10 working days. All complaints submitted in writing will be responded to in writing. As necessary the complainant may be contacted to discuss the matter in detail. Staff members receiving complaints will raise these with their line manager for discussion and assessment of response.

If the complainant is unsatisfied with the response of the staff member/team to the issue of concern or if the matter is not appropriate to be raised directly, the complainant is encouraged to lodge a formal complaint to the Operations Manager (or, if the complaint is concerning the Operations Manager, to the Chief Executive Officer). Formal complaints should be submitted in writing. Complainants are encouraged to access support for submission of formal complaints through [tenant advocate](#) or [community legal services](#) as required.

Complaints lodged formally will have an initial response provided, in writing within 10 working days, summarising the issue of complaint and indicating a timeframe for investigation and response to the issue. Investigation into the issue may involve interviews with the complainant/Women's Housing Company staff and the review of files/correspondence/other documents as required; all complaints will be dealt with confidentially and in a manner so as to ensure no penalty on the complainant. The investigation will check if policy and procedure have been adhered to, if correct information was provided, and if action taken was appropriate. A formal response to the issue will be provided in writing in the timeframe initially indicated.

All formal complaints will be reported to the Women's Housing Company Board of Directors and, as appropriate, integrated into the continuous improvement framework or performance management processes as appropriate.