Approved by Senior Management Team 19/02/26

Date Issued	March 2013
Last Review Date	February 2026
Department	Corporate
Title	**Comments and Complaints Policy**
Objective	To ensure that comments and complaints are used to drive service improvements; that we deal with all complaints appropriately within our timescales and that we resolve complaints wherever possible
Responsible	Chief Executive
Next Review Date	February 2031

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 Our Vision is to provide “Healthy Happy Homes”. We recognise that we will not always get things right and we value feedback from customers. Effective handling of comments and complaints can improve the quality of services we deliver to our customers and help foster a culture of continuous improvement throughout the Association.

1.2 Anyone who receives, requests or is affected by our services can make a comment or complaint. We will recognise and respect the different needs of people and will be flexible and responsive to those needs as far as possible and appropriate. We will listen with empathy and respect, and will treat people with dignity and compassion.

1.3 We will make it easy for customers to make a comment or complaint and will ensure they feel supported to do so, observing confidentiality where necessary and appropriate.

1.4 We will also ensure that effective records enable accurate and meaningful monitoring and reporting of outcomes, particularly where a comment or complaint has led to a change in a process or policy.

1.5 We will respond to a complaint on our Facebook page by signposting the customer to our Complaints Handling Procedure.

1.6 We aim to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity. We will investigate complaints and resolve them as closely as possible to the point of frontline service deliver,. ensuring that the person making the complaint is at the heart of the process and is kept fully informed throughout the complaint handling process.

1.7 Where complaints are raised about more than one service area, we will ensure a single co-ordinated response is made.

1.8 If a customer expresses dissatisfaction but does not want to complain, they will be encouraged to submit their complaint in line with the Complaints Handling Procedure. This will ensure feedback on the outcome of the complaint is communicated to the customer.

1.9 If a customer insists that they do not wish to complain, the issue will be recorded as an anonymous complaint to ensure completeness of our complaints data and allow us to fully consider the matter. This will also provide us with an accurate position regarding complaints for analysis and learning purposes.

1.10 If a customer is unable or reluctant to make a complaint, we will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

1.11 We will only normally consider complaints that are raised within six months of when the customer first became aware of the issue about which they are making a complaint. This timeframe also applies where a customer wishes to escalate their complaint because they are unhappy with the response to their initial complaint.

1.12 This Policy reflects the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Model Complaint Handling Procedure for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the SPSO Principles (revised 2025) which we have fully adopted. This includes the Child Friendly Complaints Handling process when a complaint is received from a child or and adult on their behalf, or from an adult about any matter which affects a child.

1.13 Complaints about data protection issues are not handled under the SPSO Model Complaints Procedure. Separate legislation (see 3.4) requires us to provide an accessible and responsive complaints process, ensuring complaints received are acknowledged within 30 days and responded to without undue delay. To improve upon these timeframes, we will follow the timescales set out at Stage 2 of the SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure. Procedures for the handling of data protection complaints will be provided.

1.14 We will use complaint performance data to drive learning, improvements and efficiency in both the service we deliver and how we handle complaints to ensure continuous improvement of service delivery.

1.15 We will actively promote and publicise out Complaints Handling Procedure, ensuring customers know how to access it. Communications will be clear and easily understood.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Our definition of a complaint is: *'Any expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of us'.*

2.2 A comment may be positive or negative and will often be expressed as an opinion or suggestion, for example "That should not have happened" or "You need to improve…." or "All of your tenants should be told about this excellent service"

2.3 A "Significant Performance Failure" is defined by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. The issue may be raised with us in the first instance and referred to the SHR only if we fail to deal with the matter effectively.

3.0 Legal and Regulatory Framework

3.1 The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 places a statutory duty on Registered Social Landlords to comply with the SPSO Model Complaint Handling Procedure published for the housing sector.

3.2 The Scottish Housing Regulator will monitor compliance with the model Complaint Handling Procedure.

3.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter came into effect on 1st April 2012 and places a duty upon RSLs to make it easy for tenants and other customers to make complaints and provide feedback on services, using that information to improve services and performance, and letting people know what they have done in response to complaints and feedback.

3.4 The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 places a statutory duty on organisations holding data about individuals (Controllers) to have an accessible and responsive formal complaints procedure for data-usage / data protection related issues.

3.5 This policy complies with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and seeks not to consciously or unconsciously discriminate or to have an adverse effect upon any of the nine protected characteristic groups outlined in the Act.

3.6 This Policy also complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

4.0 Comments

4.1 Negative comments will usually be recorded as complaints and dealt with through our Complaints Handling Process.

4.2 Positive comments and suggestions from tenants, applicants and other service users are also welcomed, as they can provide informal feedback on the standards we achieve, provide opportunities to improve existing services, and may also provide 'early warning' of issues that could evolve into complaints, allowing us to take early action.

4.3 We will record positive comments in the same way as negative comments and complaints and include them in our monitoring and reporting systems to ensure that all customer feedback is considered and acted upon where appropriate.

5.0 Monitoring and Reporting

5.1 We will monitor how comments and complaints are handled, how well we meet our target timescales and what changes we have made in response to complaints. Regular reports will be considered by our Performance Committee and the ELHA Board.

5.2 We will publish the outcome of complaints and the actions we have taken in response, on elha.com every quarter and annually in our performance report to tenants. The number of complaints and praise received is also reported on our P365 microsite on elha.com.

5.3 We will also collate responses received from the surveys or comment cards we send out with our E-news or newsletters and provide feedback to tenants on these comments where appropriate.

6.0 Staff Training

6.1 We will ensure that all complaints received are handled by informed, well trained and empowered staff.

6.2 Our staff training plan will ensure all appropriate staff receive regular training on the handling of complaints, ensuring that the process is fair, impartial, accountable, objective and led by evidence-based investigation, and that findings and decisions are based on facts and established circumstances. New staff will receive complaints training as part of their induction training.

7.0 Policy Review

7.1 The Chief Executive will ensure that this policy is reviewed every five years or following a review and amendments by the SPSO to the model Complaint Handling Procedure and will submit any significant changes to the ELHA Board for approval.