

Complaints policy and procedure

Version History

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description of Changes
2023/1	September 2023	Board of Trustees	Organisational wide policy Incorporating requirements of the Housing Ombudsmans Complaint Handling Code

Policy Owner

Head of Central Services.

Purpose and Scope

YMCA East Surrey is committed to providing accessible, quality service and achieving the highest standards. We recognise that from time to time there may be concerns or complaints, that our stakeholders have the right to raise such complaints or concerns, and that they need a mechanism to do so to ensure an early and effective resolution of complaints.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a consistent and positive approach to resolve complaints promptly, fairly and politely, so you know what to expect and when.
- Learn from where we have made mistakes and use the experience to inform improvements to service delivery and thereby increased satisfaction for all service users and the members of the public.

This policy applies to all complaints received across all YMCA East Surrey services. Any service user or stakeholder can make a complaint.

This policy does not apply to:

- Allegations of abuse, neglect or discrimination, which will be managed through the appropriate Safeguarding policy and procedure.
- Employees or volunteers where they have concerns or grievances as these will be managed through YMCA East Surrey specific policies.
- Disputes between housing residents are not complaints and should be raised with a member of staff through the house rules procedures.

Definitions

A complaint is defined 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 or group of people'.

A complaint can be made by anyone affected or likely to be affected by the service, actions or decisions taken by YMCA East Surrey. A complaint can also be made by someone acting on behalf of a service user, with their consent.

Complaints should normally be made within 6 months of the matter occurring or from the date it came to your notice.

Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related policies and procedures:

- Code of conduct
- Data protection
- Disciplinary
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Grievance
- Safeguarding (Adults and Children)
- Whistleblowing

Policy Principles

The key principles that underpin this policy are:

- To increase people's confidence that their complaints will be taken seriously and that services will improve as a result of their experiences.
- To have a flexible approach to resolving complaints, which includes effective support.
- To provide a seamless approach to complaints handling and investigations
- To ensure organisational openness and fairness when dealing with complaints
- To ensure an approach which is fair to people using our services.
- To place the emphasis on early and effective resolution of complaints
- To deal with the complaint as sensitively as possible, respecting confidentiality for the person reporting a complaint or concern.
- Treat all complaints seriously, adhering to YMCA East Surrey's equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees

- Oversee the learning from complaints and compliance with the policy and procedure

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Ensure there is a system for making and monitoring complaints.
- Make themselves available should a complaint be escalated to more senior representative.
- The Head of Children & Young People or Head of Housing will notify Ofsted of any complaints, at the time of inspection.

Head of Central Services

- Periodically reports to the SLT and to the Board on the number of complaints received and the status of those complaints.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- All serious safeguarding issues must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Head of Service, who will inform the CEO immediately without delay (see Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults policy).

Managers

- Ensure posters are displayed on notice boards across all service locations to make service users, parents/carers, and all stakeholders aware of the complaints policy and procedure.
- Seek to resolve complaint fairly and within the timescales set with this policy
- Follow the procedure below.

Staff and volunteers

- Ensure that any complaint received by them is dealt with in adherence to the policy and procedure.
- Forward all complaints to the appropriate manager and/or mailbox (Admin@ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk).

Complaints process overview

Complaints may be made in a number of ways, letter, telephone, in person, by email or using the feedback form on the website.

A service request is a request made by a Housing residents(s) requiring action to put something right. Service requests will be recorded as a maintenance request on the housing database (Pyramid). A complaint should be raised when the resident is dissatisfied with the response to the maintenance request.

There are two stages to the complaints process:

Stage 1:

- Complainant receives written acknowledgment within 5 working days to confirm the complaint has been received and indicate expectations for how long the investigation will take if it can be reasonably assessed at that point.
- In most cases, we aim to provide a full response within 10 working days. However, if this is not possible because for example, a detailed investigation is required, we will provide an interim reply explaining what is being done to deal with the complaint and provide a revised timescale which will not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.
- In some cases where the complainant may have expressed a preference for a telephone discussion regarding the outcome, this will always be followed up by a written response so that both parties have a written record of the outcome.

Stage 2:

- If the complainant feels that the complaint has not been dealt with to their satisfaction, you may appeal by writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) within 10 working days of receiving the written response. They will need to state why they are unhappy with the outcome and include copies of any correspondence exchanged during the earlier stages. The CEO will endeavour to make a decision on the appeal. The complainant will be notified in writing within 20 working days from the date of the appeal. The decision made at this level is considered final.

At each stage the complainant must be confirmed of the following in plain language:

- The complaint stage
- The complaint definition
- The decision of the complaint
- The reasons for the decisions made
- The details of any remedy offered to put things right
- Details of any outstanding actions

If the complaint is about the CEO or a Trustee, the complainant will need to contact the Chair of the Trustees who will advise of the procedure that will be followed together with associated timescales.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of an complaint:

1. Against YMCA East Surrey, please follow the Charity Commission guidance: [Raising Concerns · Starter Portal \(charitycommission.gov.uk\)](#)
2. Regarding any of YMCA East Surrey registered childcare or housing provision submit a complaint to Ofsted on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or call 03001234666.
3. Our housing support provision contact the Housing Ombudsman Service:
 - a. Online form [Make a complaint - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)
 - b. Email info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
 - c. Phone 0300 111 3000
 - d. Fax 020 7831 1942
 - e. Send a letter to Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ

Implementation and review

Monitor:	Head of Central Services
Approve:	SLT
Endorse:	Board of Trustees
Review:	August 2026