

Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Procedure

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Policy/Procedure control					
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Version	Amendment	Updates	s Made		
Number	date				
1	14 th May 2010	Minor u	pdates		
2	11 th Nov 2011	Split po	licy and procedures and made minor		
۷		amendn	nents to section 9		
	13 th Nov 2014		ure changed to incorporate feedback from		
3			C dated 20.09.12.		
			orporated freepost and e mail information		
	September		d information on CQC notifications.		
	2016	Changed 'Service User' to 'Client'.			
		Rewording Section 4 for complaint handling and			
4		recording New Section 8 introduced to note how 'Suggestions'			
		may be considered.			
		Appendix 3 provides Client summary for making a			
		'compla			
		•	uded deadline (30 days) for complainant to		
	respond to latest correspondence – item recommended by internal audit Jan/Feb17		•		
			•		
5	June 2017		10 notes Disciplinary and Grievance		
	Interim update	procedures (10.5) Added Appendix 4 – guide for external partners needing to complain			
	only				
		Interim	amendments are in response to Internal Audit		
		review o	of Communications (Jan'17)		
6	April 2019	Minor te	erminology updates for scheduled review.		

7	February 2022	Review and changed to ensure compliance with Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code. Definition of complaint updated. Added how to make a complaint, closing a complaint and lesson learnt section. Complaints stages clarified and clarity given on the team responsible for overseeing complaints.
8	May 2023	Minor changes to semantics and terms for reviewing complaints.
9	June 2024	Review and change to ensure compliance with compliance handling code regarding number of complaint stages, definition of service report and the correct timeframe for excluding complaints amongst others.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Langley House Trust encourages feedback from all those who use its services.

 The use of this procedure is seen as one way to obtain feedback for us to improve the quality of services and the level of satisfaction, and to celebrate where this is currently done well.
- 1.2 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure a consistent approach to complaint handling, registering compliments and reviewing feedback.
- 1.3 The organisation is committed to complying with the Housing Ombudsman complaints handling code and will audit the complaints process against this annually completing the Housing Ombudsman's self-assessment form and will report the findings to the Trustees, including any actions to ensure compliance against the code.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this procedure a complaint is defined as any 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 behalf, affecting an individual client or a group of clients. The client does not have to use the word complaint in order for it to be treated as such.
- 2.2 A compliment is defined as positive feedback regarding the service received. A compliment may be made about an individual staff member, team or a service as a whole.
- 2.3 A service request is different from a complaint. A service request is a request from a client to the organization requiring action to put something right. Service requests are not complaints but must be recorded on Eclipse and ACC as an action, monitored, and reviewed regularly until completion.
- 2.4 A complaint must be raised when a client expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Services must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the client complains.
- 2.5 An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to.
- 2.6 Services must always provide details of how a client can complain when asking for wider feedback about the services delivered to the client.

3. Examples of possible issues that may result in a complaint

- 3.1 The below are examples of types of issues that may result in a complaint. This is not an exhaustive list.
- 3.2 An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service.
- 3.3 Action or lack of action by staff affecting an individual or group.
- 3.4 An allegation that staff have failed to observe proper procedures.
- 3.5 An allegation that there has been an unacceptable delay in dealing with a matter.
- 3.6 An expression of dissatisfaction about how an individual has been treated by a member of staff.
- 3.7 An incident or issue raised by an external source or 3rd party (e.g. a neighbour).

- 3.9 A complaint about anti-social behaviour from a Langley House Trust client **will not** be regarded as a complaint unless it is about the organisations handling of the behaviour. A complaint must be accepted unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If the service decides not to accept a complaint, it must be able to justify its reasoning and must also liaise with the Quality Team before deciding not to accept the complaint. Additionally, each complaint must be considered on its own merits.
- 3.10 Where a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated, the circumstances must be fair and reasonable to the client.
- 3.11 Acceptable exclusions include: The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago, there is an on-going legal proceeding (This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court), and matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- 3.12 The organisation will accept complaints referred to it within 12 months of the incident occurring or the client becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. The organisation will consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so. In such circumstances, service managers must consult with the Quality Team before making any decisions.
- 3.13 Where the organisation decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the client setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman. Including information on how the client can escalate the complete to the Ombudsman.

4. Who can make a complaint

- 4.1 Anyone can make a complaint about Langley House Trust's services. This includes but is not limited to clients, client's family, friends or advocates, neighbours and other professionals the organisation works with.
- 4.2 The time limit for raising a complaint is 12 months from the occurrence of the incident.
- 4.3 The Trust Quality Team has been assigned the responsibilities of the Complaint Officer and has the responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).
- 4.4 The Head of Quality and Compliance has been designated as accountable for complaint handling and they will assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.
- 4.5 The Director of Quality and Compliance has been designated as the Member Responsible for Complaints and have the lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture

5. Informal feedback

- 5.1 The organisation welcomes feedback from clients and there are a number of ways in which this can be done. We undertake periodic feedback questionnaires and where appropriate undertake exit interviews however clients are encouraged to give feedback at any time. This can be done via feedback cards or via e-mail.
- 5.2 Each Service has '**Feedback Cards**' available and a Feedback Poster displayed. (See Appendix 3)
- 5.3 Feedback can be both positive and negative. Clients can complete the card anonymously.

Clients can also indicate on the card that they would like further discussion on the issue they have raised with a staff member. This feedback will be reviewed at service level.

- 5.4 Feedback cards received locally will be scanned by the service and emailed to feedback@langleyhousetrust.org by staff.
- 5.5 Feedback can also be sent directly via mail at feedback@langleyhousetrust.org.

 This e-mail is received by the Quality team.
- 5.6 Feedback whether positive or negative is audited monthly and will help shape service delivery in the future.

6. How to make a complaint

- 6.1 Complaints can be made verbally, in writing, via e-mail at feedback@langleyhousetrust.org or via telephone on 03330 035025 and select option 2.
- 6.2 Complaints relating to services will initially be dealt with by the relevant service management team.
- 6.3 Complaints relating to the wider organisation will initially be dealt with by the Quality team.

7. The stages of the complaint procedure

7.1 **Stage 1-**

7.1.1 This stage aims to sort out problems as quickly as possible. The organisation will consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further investigation, factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the resident is vulnerable or at risk is always considered. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the client. Complaints must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 1 of the complaint's procedure within 5 working days of the complaint being received.

- 7.1.2 A full response must be issued to stage 1 complaints <u>within 10 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 7.1.3 A decision is to be made whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of a complaint and then inform the client of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than **10 working days** without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the client.
- 7.1.4 When a client is informed about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman
- 7.1.5 A complaint response must be provided to the client when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed.
- 7.1.6 Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate update es provided to the client.
- 7.1.7 The complaint response must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions while referencing the relevant policy if applicable.
 Where a client raises additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being

investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.

- 7.1.8 The organisation will confirm the following in writing to the client at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:
 - a) the complaint stage;
 - b) the complaint definition;
 - c) the decision on the complaint;
 - d) the reasons for any decisions made;
 - e) the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
 - f) details of any outstanding actions; and
 - g) details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response
- 7.1.9All Stage 1 complaints need to be registered on the ACC incident management system and should be closed once resolved.

7.2 Stage 2 -

- 7.2.1 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the client's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the organisation's procedure and stage 2 is the 's organisation's final response.
- 7.2.2 Requests for stage 2 must be acknowledged, defined and logged at stage 2 of the complaint's procedure **within 5 working days** of the escalation request being received.
- 7.2.3 clients must not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. The organisation will make reasonable efforts to understand why a client remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.
- 7.2.4 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 must not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage and should be a more senior colleague.
- 7.2.5 The organisation must issue a final response to the stage 2 <u>within 20 working days</u> of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 7.2.6 A decision is to be made whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of a complaint and then inform the client of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than **20 working days** without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the client
- 7.2.7 When an organisation informs a client about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman
- 7.2.8 A complaint response must be provided to the client when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the client. The response to the complaint must also address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy where applicable.
- 7.2.9 The organisation will confirm the following in writing to the client at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:
- a. the complaint stage;
- b. the complaint definition;
- c. the decision on the complaint;
- d. the reasons for any decisions

made:

- e. the details of any remedy offered to put things right;
- f. details of any outstanding actions; and
- g. details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman Service if the individual remains dissatisfied.

Stage 2 is the organisation's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.

8 Closing Complaints

- 8.1 A complaint will be considered closed when the complainant has been written to, outlining what has been done to resolve the complaint, actions to rectify the complaint have been agreed and the client has indicated that they are satisfied with the outcome.
- 8.2 The complainant must be written to informing them that the complaint is closed and giving opportunity to feedback further or to escalate the complaint externally using the template in appendix 2.
- 8.3 Where something has gone wrong the organisation will acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. These can include:
 - a Apologising;
 - b. Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
 - c. Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
 - d. Taking action if there has been delay;
 - e. Reconsidering or changing a decision;
 - f. Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
 - g. Providing a financial a financial remedy;
 - h. Changing policies, procedures or practices.
 - i. Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the client as a result of any fault identified
 - j. The remedy offer must clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the client where appropriate. Any remedy proposed must be followed through to completion
 - k. The organisation must take account of the guidance issued by the Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

9. Referring a Complaint Externally

9.1 Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme

- 9.1.1 If clients remain dissatisfied, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme. This can be done by clients in all types of service provision.
- 9.1.2 The Ombudsman will investigate a complaint, but generally will not do so unless the internal complaints procedure has been completed first.
- 9.1.3 The Ombudsman can be contacted directly at:

The Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 02074213800.

E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

9.2 Care Quality Commission

9.2.1 Clients who are in accommodation in care services can complain to the Care Quality

Commission.

- 9.2.2 If clients feel dissatisfied with the service, then an independent complaint can be made to the Care Quality Commission.
- 9.2.3 The National contact details for the Care Quality Commission are:

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence, Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161 E-mail: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

9.3 Safeguarding Authorities

- 9.3.1 If clients have been abused (which can include physical, mental or sexual abuse) and feel they cannot speak to the Trust's staff then the safeguarding authority can be contacted directly.
- 9.3.2 The contact details of the local safeguarding authority are on the notice board of the service.

9.4 Advocacy/Support

9.4. SOVA Support for Vulnerable Adults (http://www.sova.org.uk/) does not handle complaints but has worked with the Trust client groups as advocate/support.

10. Formal Complaints received from External Agencies

- 10.1 Where appropriate we would encourage external agencies to raise concerns initially with the local service or department however, we recognise that external agencies may feel that this is not appropriate and would like to raise a concern formally.
- 10.2 External agencies with concerns about service delivery should do so initially to the Quality team.
- 10.3 The contact details for the team are:

feedback@langleyhousetrust.org

or

PO Box 6364, Coventry CV2 2QJ Or 03330 035025 option 2.

- 10.4 The Quality team will open the complaint on the ACC system and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.
- 10.5 The Quality team will investigate the complaint and will send a written response within 10 working days of the complaint being opened. This will be treated as a stage 1 complaint.
- 10.6 If the complainant is dissatisfied the complaint will be escalated to the Director of Care and Quality or another Director in their absence as a stage 2 complaint.
- 10.7 The Director will review the complaint and the response and will issue a final viewpoint letter within 20 working days of the escalation notification being acknowledge.
- 10.8 Once the Langley House Trust internal procedures are concluded the external agency can refer to an external regulatory body. These regularity bodies are documented in section 9 of this procedure.

Time Frames for responding to complaints

STAGES	Initial response time frame	Resolution response time frame	
Stage 1-	5 working days	10 working days	
Stage2	5 working days	20 working days	
External Agencies	5 working days	10 working days	

12 Compliments

- 12.1 Our aim is to use compliments about a service or an individual staff member to celebrate and share good practice throughout the organisation and encourage staff to provide an excellent service.
- 12.2 Compliments can be verbal, written including on the feedback cards available at projects or e-mailed to feedback@langleyhousetrust.org

13. Monitoring and Lessons Learnt

- 13.1 The organisation is committed to developing a positive complaint handling culture where transparency and accountability is embedded.
- 13.2 All complaints and compliments will be audited by the Quality team on a monthly basis to monitor outcomes and to ensure that they are being dealt with appropriately and within the set time frames, and to monitor and address any trends. The organisation will report on the management of complaints at the Executive Team meeting through the information supplied by the Quality team and at the Operations and Quality Committee meetings.
- 13.3 The organisation is committed to learn from issues that have been raised and to take steps to review and improve services and/or internal processes. This will be done as part of quality review process including lessons learnt meetings.
- 13.4 The organisation will feed back to clients any themes from complaints reporting as well as any wider learning and improvements that have resulted from complaints received.

14. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 14.1 The Trust upholds the principle of equality for all as a framework that enables individuals to access opportunity, participate and contribute in ways that are fair and inclusive, avoiding discrimination and challenging inappropriate attitudes.
- 14.2 Recognising that it works with and serves individuals in a diverse society, the Trust seeks to act in a fair and equitable way to all.
- 14.3 In respect of complaints, compliments and suggestions the Trust will monitor all returns to highlight any patterns of discrimination or harassment against particular groups including by gender, ethnicity, age and disability.
- 14.4 The Trust recognises that some clients require assistance to complain, give a suggestion or compliment due to learning disabilities, language or literacy difficulties.

14.5 The Trust will ensure that the complaints process is available in easy read and also in video format for clients to access.

15. Client Involvement

15.1 The Trust restates its commitment to the genuine and meaningful involvement of clients in the formation and review of all policies which have an impact on service delivery. Following the scheduled Trust committee approval, this procedure will be referred for input from clients.

16. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- 16.1 As part of its work, Langley House Trust will collect, hold and use information about people who receive services from or who work with or for the Trust. This will include the Trust's clients, staff, supporters, volunteers, partners and suppliers and those applying to the Trust for services or employment.
- 16.2 The Trust upholds the rights of data subjects to have their information processed in a lawful, transparent and fair manner, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and will process all personal information in line with its own Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy and Procedures. Failure to do so or to report a potential breach of data confidentiality may be investigated under the Trust's Disciplinary Procedures.

Appendix 1

Letter acknowledging a complaint

Date

To [Name] Address

Dear [insert name]

Thank you for your complaint about (insert a clear, concise summary of complaint). We take all complaints seriously at Langley and welcome the opportunity to improve our services wherever possible, so thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with us.

Your complaint has been allocated to (insert name of person undertaking the investigation/the Quality team) to investigate because it is about a local issue/Langley House Trust as an organisation (delete as appropriate)

What happens next?

(Insert name of person investigating) will write to you with their conclusions about what needs to be done to resolve your complaint within 10 working days of you receiving this letter. This is stage 1 of our complaints process and helps us to make sure we respond to you quickly, with sensible resolutions.

If you are not happy with the result that (insert the name of person investigating) suggests, then you can move to stage 2. This means you want your complaint looked at again and it is really important for you to raise this as soon as possible from stage 1.

You need to let one of the managers at your service know this is what you want to do, or send your complaint through to the Quality Team, by emailing feedback@langleyhousetrust.org

What happens if I am still not happy with the response after stage 1?

Furthermore, at stage 2 different member of staff will be asked to review it, and this may involve someone more senior or a staff member outside of the service you are complaining about.

Your stage 2 complaint will also be acknowledged within 5 working days and you will you will receive a written response within 20 working days of your stage 2 complaint being acknowledged, often called an outcome letter.

We hope that your outcome letter will offer a conclusion that is right for you, but if not then that outcome letter will give more details about what you can do next if our internal processes (stages 1, and 2) have not brought you a satisfactory response. There are options for you to take your complaint to an external reviewer at that stage.

I hope that this feels clear and that you are confident your complaint is being handled fairly and taken seriously. Please ask your service manager for support if you need it to make a complaint; we understand that it can feel quite stressful but want to assure you that you will be heard and responded to respectfully and well.

Thank you for taking the time to raise this issue with us.

Yours sincerely

Name

Title.

Appendix 2

Sequential outcome letters confirming the completion of a stage 1 and 2 investigation/reviewLetter confirming the completion of a stage 1 complaint investigation

Date

To [Name Address

Dear [Insert name]

Thank you for raising you concerns about [insert clear, concise details about the complaint] made on [date complaint raised].

I have had the opportunity to investigate your complaint and can confirm the following:

[Insert details about (1) agreed facts, (2) any actions taken or promised to be taken, including timeframes and (3) the reasons why this seems like a good resolution]

I hope that you are satisfied with the outcome of this investigation. However, if you are not satisfied with the way your complaint was handled you can ask for it to be reviewed as a stage 2 review. If you would like to request a stage 2 review, please notify us as soon as possible once you receive this letter, giving reasons why you are unsatisfied with outcomes presented above.

You need to let one of the managers at your service know this is what you want to do, or send your complaint through to the Quality Team, by emailing feedback@langleyhousetrust.org

Your escalation will be acknowledged with 5 working days; furthermore, within 20 working days of your escalation being acknowledged, you should hear back in writing what has been done, or what will be done as a result of your stage 2 complaint review.

A different member of staff will be asked to review your complaint, and this may involve someone more senior or a staff member outside of the service you are complaining about.

If you require support in requesting a stage 2 review, please ask your service manager for assistance and they will be happy to help you.

Yours sincerely

[Name and contact details]

Letter confirming the completion of a stage 2 review of complaint investigation

Date

To [Name Address

Dear (Insert name)

Thank you for raising you concerns about [insert clear, concise details about the complaint] made on [date complaint raised] as a stage 2 complaint.

I have had the opportunity to review your complaint as well as the outcomes suggested by the previous investigator at stage 1and can confirm the following:

[Insert details about (1) agreed facts, (2) any actions taken or promised to be taken, including timeframes and (3) the reasons why your reviewed outcomes seem to offer a good resolution]

I hope that you are satisfied with the conclusion of this stage 2 review, which is the final stage of our internal complaints process.

If you remain unsatisfied with the way your complaint has been managed and addressed, you can now ask for it to be reviewed externally and you have several options to be able to follow this through. This would usually need to be within as soon as possible of stage 2 being closed, which is as soon reasonable possible since you receive this stage 2 outcome letter.

You can share your complaint with any of the following external agencies if you are not satisfied with the response Langley staff have given you in writing:

• The Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme: this can be used by clients in all types of Langley services.

The Ombudsman will investigate a complaint, but usually will not do so unless Langley's internal complaints procedure has been completed first (stages 1, and 2).

The Ombudsman can be contacted directly at:

The Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN Telephone: 02074213800.

E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

• Clients who are in accommodation in care services can complain to the Care Quality Commission. The national contact details for the Care Quality Commission are:

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence,

Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161 E-mail: enquiries@cqc.org.uk

• If you have been abused (which can include physical, mental or sexual abuse) and feel you cannot speak to Langley staff, then you can contact the safeguarding authority. The

contact details of the local safeguarding authority are different for each service and can be found on the notice board of your service.

Thank you for the time you have spent in sharing your concerns with us and I hope you have had your matter resolved to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely

[Name and contact details]



Is there a hero in your home?

Has a member of staff made a special effort to help you?



	Share your views
ld	The project
ssed with	
eased with	1 I'm not very
0000001 771177	O TITITION VOIV
	Name:
	Project Name:
	Date:
ne if you don't want to	You do not need to give you
omeone to talk with you	Please tick the box if you would about your comment
	Please put completed cards in the seen and discussed by the proje management team.
	You can also feedback to us or n
am) Langley House Trust,	 Writing to Feedback (Housi PO Box 6364, Coventry, CV6
etrust.org	 Emailing: feedback@langle Calling 03330 035025, option
	Complaint response times:
orking days. See the Client	 If you are making an ir expect a response within t Handbook for more details
orking days. See the	 If you are making an ir expect a response within to