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## **MAGNA HOUSING**

# **FORMAL COMPLAINTS POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At Magna, we strive to provide the best possible service to our customers, first time, every time. Sometimes things go wrong and customers don't get the service they expect or we fall short of the standards we've promised. When that happens, the way we manage, resolve and learn from complaints is key to helping us meet our objective of providing a great customer experience. Our aim is to ensure that we take ownership of complaints at the first point of contact, that we do all we can to resolve the concern straight away with the customer so that it doesn't escalate to a formal complaint and that we learn from complaints as a way of improving the customer experience.
- 1.2 This policy explains how we will make it easy for our customers to tell us when things have gone wrong and how we'll try to find a resolution.

### **2. Who can complain?**

- 2.1 The policy and process is open to everyone who uses our services, including customers, former customers, applicants for housing, leaseholders, contractors, consultants, suppliers, applicants for employment and members of the public affected by our services.

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The Board decided to retain control over all aspects of this policy, save for factual updating

- 2.2 We accept complaints made by advocates authorised to act on a customer's behalf. We will support customers with a physical or mental impairment or language difficulty to make a complaint.

### **3. What is a formal complaint?**

- 3.1 The policy complies with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code published in July 2020. We use the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint: 'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, our actions or lack of action, our own staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents'
- 3.2 In the first instance, we encourage anyone dissatisfied with us to make an expression of dissatisfaction, by contacting the relevant person or department at Magna. Many problems can be resolved in this way without using the formal complaint process. We will encourage customers to make a complaint formal where they are not satisfied with any other response to their problem. We also expect our colleagues to make every effort to resolve the complaint with you and to fix the problem at the first point of contact with you so that complaints don't drag on. Personal contact with customers and early ownership of problems is central to our approach.
- 3.3 The safety of our customers is at the heart of what we do. If we receive a complaint concerning the safety of a customer or their home we will ensure that it is investigated and treated seriously and as a priority.
- 3.4 We will not consider a matter as a formal complaint where
  - 3.4.1 it is an initial request for a service, such as requesting a repair or reporting neighbour nuisance (unless during the course of the initial service request the customer is not satisfied with our response); or
  - 3.4.2 there is already an alternative, appropriate appeal procedure available, such as in the allocation of properties; or
  - 3.4.3 legal proceedings have been started; or
  - 3.4.4 it has already been considered under our formal complaints policy (unless the customer felt the complaint hadn't been dealt with properly)
- 3.5 Formal complaints must be logged with Magna within six months (except where complaints concern safeguarding or health and safety issues) of the customer becoming aware of the problem causing the complaint. If the problem is a recurring issue, we will consider any older reports as part of the background to the complaint if this will help to resolve the issue for the customer. We will only log a formal complaint when it is clear that, from a

customers perspective, we have not been able to resolve the issue at the first point of contact.

- 3.6 A formal complaint will be regarded as being at an end when it has been closed in writing by the head of customer experience.

#### **4. Unreasonable or vexatious complaints**

- 4.1 If a customer makes the same or similar complaint repeatedly without good reason or appears to be raising a complaint with no grounds in order to cause disruption, annoyance or harassment, the relevant director reserves the right to close the complaint or refuse to investigate it.

#### **5. Our approach**

- 5.1 We have robust procedures for managing complaints and a service standard designed by our customers. Our approach to managing complaints is well publicised on our website and through other media.
- 5.2 Formal complaints will be investigated fully by the complaints team in conjunction with relevant colleagues. If the complaint is about a member of the complaints team it will be investigated independently by the head of customer experience. Any escalated complaints (including, but not limited to, serious injury, data protection/legal matters, health and safety, racism or discrimination and any complaints involving a minor or vulnerable person) will be investigated by the relevant head of service/director. If the complaint is about the head of service/director, it will be investigated independently by another head of service/director. We will contact the customer personally to understand the nature of the complaint and to see if it can be resolved quickly. The complaint will be responded to within 10 working days.
- 5.3 If the customer remains dissatisfied (that is they want to appeal) and there are grounds for the complaint to proceed further, it will be investigated afresh. If a head of service/director has previously investigated the complaint or the complaint is about the head of service/director, it will be investigated independently by another head of service/director or the Chief Executive. The complaint will be responded to within 20 working days.
- 5.4 We will publicise the Housing Ombudsman Service and inform the customer they have the right to refer the complaint to this service.

#### **6. Monitoring and review**

- 6.1 In order for us to understand the areas of our services where customers are dissatisfied, learn from this and improve our services we will:
  - 6.1.1 Contact every customer who makes a formal complaint to ask them how we dealt with it. This helps us improve the way we manage and resolve complaints.
  - 6.1.2 Record all feedback and learn from our mistakes so that we don't make the same mistakes and we improve our services. We'll review every complaint to see whether there are things we can change immediately. When we carry out this review we will also try to identify if there are any underlying reasons for things going wrong.
  - 6.1.3 Ensure the Board review formal complaint trends and their outcomes at least once a year.
  - 6.1.4 Ensure the Board review all complaints regarding Magna that are considered by the Housing Ombudsman Service.
  - 6.1.5 Inform customers and others how we use complaints to improve our services and publish information about complaints each year.