



Our Customer Feedback Policy

March 2017

Aim of Our Customer Feedback Policy

Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints

Our approach offers a simple and accessible customer feedback process. We very much welcome feedback because it identifies areas where our services can be improved and provides an opportunity to learn from good practice.

We make sure that any **compliments** received are passed on to staff and contractors and that any **suggestions** made by customers, to improve our services, are considered and where appropriate, put into action.

We also ensure that, when things go wrong, **complaints** are dealt with fairly, impartially, consistently and in a timely manner. Outcomes of complaints are monitored to make sure that services are improved and wherever possible, that the factors that gave rise to the complaint, do not recur.

Definitions

Compliment

A **compliment** is defined as *'feedback which is of a positive nature which expresses praise for a staff member, contractor or service provided by Arcon'.*

Suggestion

A **suggestion** is *'an idea or plan put forward for consideration'.*

Complaint

A **complaint** is an *'expression of dissatisfaction with a service, provided by Arcon Housing Association, where a previous attempt to resolve the issue has failed.'*

Compliments - Stages in the Process

Stage One

Compliments will always be passed on to the relevant staff member, contractor or service.

Stage Two

Compliments will be recorded in Arcon's **Compliment Register**.

Suggestions - Stages in the Process

Stage One

Suggestions will always be passed to the appropriate **Department Manager** for consideration.

Stage Two

The **Service Manager** will feed back to the person who made the suggestion, to update them as to whether the suggestion will be implemented.

Complaints - Stages in the Process

Formal Complaints Process

Formal complaints can be made in writing, by email or by telephone. Alternatively, customers can [fill in a Complaints Form online](#). The different stages that make up our **Complaints Process** are set out below.

Stage One: 'Get it Sorted' or 'Formal Response'

At the first stage in the **Complaints Process**, complaints fall into either the '**Get it Sorted**' or '**Formal Response**' classifications.

'Get it sorted'

This is an informal process that encourages the resolution of complaints, within **five** working days, through verbal communication with the customer. The outcome is agreed, with the customer and the complaint is closed verbally.

'Formal Response'

This response is used for more complex issues where further investigation is required. A complaint will be investigated fully and discussed with the customer to ensure that we understand the solution that the customer is looking for. We will reply to the complainant, in writing, within **10** working days.

During the Complaints Process, it might be necessary to '**stop the clock**' if something outside Arcon's control delays the investigation, for example if the complainant is not available to undertake a necessary inspection or is unable to be interviewed. The complainant will always be made aware that the 'clock has stopped'.

The decision, as to which classification is appropriate, is dependent on whether:

- the problem can be solved within **five** working days
- the complainant would be satisfied with this as an outcome
- a written response is required.

Whether '**Get it Sorted**' or '**Formal Response**' is the most appropriate route to be followed is agreed between the **Department Manager**, handling the complaint and the customer.

If we attempt to resolve a complaint, by going down the '**Get it sorted**' route and it emerges that further investigation is required, the complaint can be reclassified as needing a '**Formal Response**'. If this is the case, the total number of days, to resolve the complaint, must not exceed **10**.

Stage Two: Review by a Director

To progress to Stage Two, the complainant must contact us, within **10** working days of being notified of the **Stage One** outcome, stating clearly their reasons for believing their complaint should be considered further. We will notify the customer, within **five** working days, if we feel there is a good reason for continuing the process.

At this stage, the complaint will be reviewed by a **Service Director** but only if our investigation is considered to have been flawed or evidence that was available, at the time, was not taken into account and could have affected the overall outcome.

We will not escalate a complaint, based on a disagreement with the decision. We will also not allow a complaint to be escalated, to **Stage Two**, if we have acknowledged, at **Stage One**, that the complaint was valid and we have taken action to resolve it.

Stage Three: Independent Review by a Designated Person

Within **20** working days, the customer can ask to have the complaint reviewed further, if they are still unhappy with the outcome of the process. A **Designated Person**, being a **local councillor** or a **Member of Parliament**, can be appointed to try to resolve the complaint or to refer it, in writing, to the **Housing Ombudsman**.

Stage Four - Independent Housing Ombudsman Service

In the event that the **Designated Person** is unable to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion, the customer can contact the Ombudsman directly and ask for the case to be considered through the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#). At least **eight** weeks must have elapsed, from the end of **Stage Two**, before the customer can directly approach the **Ombudsman**.

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