1. **Introduction**

Customer service is a key part of One Manchester’s business and the aim is to provide excellent quality services for customers at all times.

However, One Manchester understands that, on occasions, customers may not be satisfied with the level of service they have received and acknowledges that complaints will sometimes be made. The key is to see any complaint as a source of feedback and to use any complaint as a way of understanding what residents really want and feel about the services provided and how to use this information to improve those services.

1. **Purpose**

To provide a fair and equitable framework within which anyone who has experienced dissatisfaction with One Manchester’s services can raise their concerns. Outcomes of complaints will be monitored to improve services and where possible to prevent a recurrence of the factors that gave rise to the complaint.

1. **Scope**

The policy applies to all groups of staff and anyone using One Manchester’s services or their representative. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer or their representative about action or lack of action, or about the standard of a service received. It also includes a complaint about performance against the regulatory standards. This applies whether the action was taken by the Group itself or a person acting on behalf of the Group.

Matters that are not considered as complaints under this policy are:

* an initial request for service, information or an explanation of how a decision has been made
* anti-social behaviour unless the complaint refers to our failure to deal with the matter appropriately
* dissatisfaction with the fairness of our policies where our policies have been correctly applied
* disputes against the amount of rent or service charge being charged
* a claim for damages or personal injury which will be dealt with as an insurance claim
* matters which have been or are expected to be the subject of legal proceedings
* matters relating solely to services or decisions outside of our control
* attempts to reopen or reconsider complaints where we have provided our final decision

We will not usually consider complaints that relate to matters that happened more than six months ago, however discretion can be applied where there is a valid reason for the delay.

Complaints made directly to the Executive Team, including the Chief Executive Officer, will be passed to the most appropriate member of staff and dealt with in accordance with this policy.

**4.0 The Policy**

We will fully investigate all complaints made about our services and staff. As we want our complaints process to be easy and accessible, complaints can be made in any way (digitally/email/text/telephone/in person/in writing and through a representative or advocate where consent has been provided).

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One Manchester’s complaints policy is based on the following principles:

* complaints will be dealt with promptly, courteously, systematically and fairly
* a positive approach will be taken to receiving complaints
* we will learn from mistakes or services failures to improve services
* complaints will be dealt with in confidence
* complaints will be acknowledged, recorded and monitored
* complainants will be kept informed of progress at each stage
* complainants will be informed of their rights to redress at each stage
* an apology will be always be given for any service failures
* all staff handling complaints will receive appropriate training

1. **Process**

We aim to resolve customer complaints promptly and will endeavour to resolve them at an informal stage wherever possible. This is generally where a customer believes they have not received a good level of service or something remains outstanding that they want resolving without the need to enter the formal complaints process. The most appropriate person will try to resolve the problem to the customer’s satisfaction and within two working days of the complaint being received.

If we are unable to resolve a complaint at the informal stage, or if the customer has specifically asked for a formal investigation of their complaint, this will be handled through our two-stage formal process. A formal complaint will be acknowledged within two working days.

A Stage 1 complaint will be investigated by a manager responsible for the service being complained about, and the final response approved by a Head of Service within 10 working days. A holding letter will be sent with an explanation if that timescale cannot be achieved.

If a customer believes that One Manchester has failed to fully address their complaint, failed to follow this policy or the outcome is incorrect they may request a Stage 2 review. This review request must clearly outline the reasons why the complaint hasn’t been fully considered etc. and include any supporting evidence. A Stage 2 review request must be received within one month of the Stage 1 response otherwise the case will be closed.

At this second stage the complainant will be offered a face to face meeting or a written appeal. The role of the panel is to review the complaint and Stage 1 response, reconsider the decision made and determine whether One Manchester followed this policy and procedures when handling the complaint. The appeal panel will be made up of a Board member, a Scrutiny Panel member and a Director from an unrelated service area wherever possible. The timescale for a Stage 2 written response is 20 working days from the date of the panel meeting. This is the final stage of One Manchester’s complaints process.

A customer satisfaction survey will be issued upon closure of a complaint at either stage.

**6.0 Independent Review (Stage 3)**

As a consequence of the Localism Act 2011, Registered Providers are required to have in place an independent review process outside of its Governance structures. Following completion of the two internal stages, complainants can if they wish opt to have their complaint reviewed, within 20 working days, by a Designated Person such as an MP or Councillor.

**7.0** **Independent Housing Ombudsman**

If the customer is still unhappy with the outcome of the complaint and has exhausted the complaints process and the Independent Review process, they have the right to have their complaint investigated by the Housing Ombudsman. If the complainant wishes to pursue this option the case can be referred via the Designated Person following the Stage 3 response.

**8.0 One Money Team - Financial Conduct Authority/Financial Ombudsman Service**

Our One Money Team is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) which has different rules for dispute resolution and is covered by the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). Details of the FCA rules are included in Appendix A – the ‘FOS quick guide to helping you resolve complaint’.

**9.0 Compensation**

If a customer has incurred any additional expense as a result of inaction or a service failure by One Manchester an offer of compensation may be made based on the loss and in line with the Compensation Policy. Evidence of losses will be required in support of this. We recognise that in some instances it may be appropriate to offer a discretionary compensation payment for upset or inconvenience when things go wrong. Any discretionary compensation award will be offset against any rent arrears or other debt owing to One Manchester.

**10.0 Method and approach**

One Manchester values our customers’ views on the way we deliver our services and is committed to using these views to improve our services. In resolving complaints we will work with the customer to achieve a positive outcome wherever possible at stage 1 of the process.

One Manchester reserves the right to exclude individuals from the complaints process where individuals abuse the process, such instances of abuse would include but not limited to; submitting excessive complaints that we believe have previously been responded to, unreasonable basis of a complaint that is deemed to be vexatious or malicious. In such instances the Unacceptable Actions and Behaviour Policy will be implemented.

**11.0 Equality**

One Manchester will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other grounds set out in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this policy.

**12.0 Responsibility**

The Board and Chief Executive are responsible for ensuring that this policy complies with legislative requirements.

Managers and other staff involved in complaint resolution are responsible for implementing this policy.

**13.0 Monitoring, review and evaluation**

Operations Committee will monitor performance relating to complaints and quarterly updates will be provided to Scrutiny Panel.

The policy will be reconsidered against any legislative changes annually and reviewed every three years.

**14.0 Legislation 15.0 Associated Policies**

Equality Act 2010 Unacceptable Actions and Behaviour Policy

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Compensation Policy

General Data Protection Regulations 2016 Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime Policy

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Speak Out Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

**Appendix A**







