

1.0 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 no organisation can deliver a perfect service every time and receiving complaints is an inevitable part of delivering a service. 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.

2.0 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.

3.0 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. This applies whether the action was taken by the Group itself or a person acting on behalf of the Group.

4.0 The Policy

We will fully investigate all complaints made about our services and staff.

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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

5.0 Definitions

Customers can make complaints that are dealt with at an informal stage. 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.

A formal complaint can be made in any way and is where the concern has not been or cannot be resolved informally and a formal resolution process is required.

The formal complaints procedure has 2 stages of progression.

Stage 1 – will be investigated by a Senior Manager responsible for the service being complained about, and the final response signed off by the Director within 10 working days.

If the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint they can request the complaint is reviewed at Stage 2 explaining the reasons why they remain dissatisfied within 28 days of receiving a response. Failure to request a review within these timescales will mean the case will be closed.

Stage 2 – A review will be offered to the complainant that is either face to face or a written review. The panel will be made up of a Board Member, a Scrutiny Panel member and a senior member of staff that has not previously been involved with the case. The timescale for a Stage 2 written response is 20 working days.

6.0 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. Any compensation payable will be offset against any rent arrears or other debt owing to One Manchester.

7.0 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 – MP, Councillor or Tenant Complaints Panel.

8.0 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.

9.0 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.

10.0 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.

11.0 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.

Links to other policies:

Unacceptable Actions and Behaviour Policy
Compensation Policy