

Feedback Policy

2016-2017



Policy Reference:

Policy/BP003 Issue 3.0

Approved by:

Senior Management Team

Date approved:

01/04/2016

A Scope and objectives

This policy sets out **bpha's** approach in addressing complaints, compliments and suggestions. It is designed to be open, easy to use and effective. It will help us recognise and address the needs and expectations of our customers and ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, impartially and in a timely manner.

Demonstrating a clear commitment to the effective management of complaints where our customers or stakeholders are dissatisfied with our services, procedures or the work of our contractors and agents. It seeks to identify opportunities to improve **bpha's** service by learning from complaints.

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction where the complainant requests a response.

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction made by a customer about the organisation, an individual, team or a service. The policy also promotes the use of compliments from customers to share good practice within **bpha** and to encourage employees to continue to provide excellent service.

B Policy statement

Statement of intent

bpha welcomes complaints as a means of providing valuable feedback about our services. We are committed to addressing service shortfalls and making service improvements to enhance customer satisfaction.

Equally **bpha** encourages positive feedback from customers in the form of compliments and suggestions which can also be used to drive service improvements and customer satisfaction.

A complaint can be made by anyone who has a direct involvement in the issue concerned. For the purpose of this policy a complaint **is not** any of the following:

- A request for service such as reporting a repair
- A request for information or explanation of a policy, practice or decision
- Matters for which there is an alternative route: e.g. an appeal against an application review etc.
- Dissatisfaction with a correctly applied **bpha** policy
- A report of anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance
- Matters referred to **bpha** insurers
- Where legal action is being taken
- Rent and Service charge reviews

The principles of complaint handling

bpha will maintain a transparent and consistent procedure for dealing with customer complaints. The process aims to resolve complaints as quickly as possible by making enquiries and carrying out investigations.

There are two processes to resolve complaints:

Informal Complaint – generally used for:

- An initial stage of a complainant to raise a concern or dissatisfaction
- A complaint that can be resolved at point of contact and immediate action taken, rather than requiring a full investigation
- Occasions where the complainant wishes to bring a matter to the attention of **bpha**, but does not wish to raise a formal complaint

Formal – generally used when:

- A complaint cannot be resolved immediately and requires a full investigation
- An informal complaint has not been resolved
- Specifically requested by the complainant

Where an informal complaint has not been resolved a further investigation will be carried out at a formal stage, and action taken documented to ensure consistency and fairness.

All complaints will be investigated to a conclusion with the exception of:-

- A complaint referring specifically to a policy issue
- Matters referred to our insurers
- Where a complainant is unreasonable, persistent or aggressive
- If legal action has commenced or there is a more appropriate body or alternative system for dealing with the issue.

If there is a complaint about an employee they will be informed about the complaint and the investigation will be carried out by a different employee.

Complainants will not be treated adversely by **bpha** as a result of making a complaint.

Compliments will be recorded and fed back to employees and the relevant service area with a view to identifying good practice and influencing service delivery.

How to complain

Complaints or compliments can be made in person, by telephone, e-mail, and letter or by completing the form in **bpha's** 'Have Your Say' or 'Suggestions and Compliments' booklets.

Complainants should contact **bpha** at the earliest opportunity of experiencing a service failure or deciding they are unhappy with our initial response. **bpha** will not normally consider a complaint that is more than 6 months after the service failure.

If a complaint demonstrates unreasonable or threatening behaviour **bpha** may progress the complaint based on the use of documentary evidence only or through representation via a third party.

Once a complaint has been raised any further or unrelated issues to the original complaint will have to be dealt with as a new complaint.

How the association responds to Complaints and Compliments

Informal complaints:

- Acknowledge the complaint within 2 working days. The acknowledgement will provide the name of the person who is dealing with the complaint and a reference number.
- Provide a response to the complaint within 5 working days of the complaint being logged.

Following an informal complaint (Feedback) there are two stages to the **bpha** formal complaints process as outlined in the “Have Your Say” booklet as follows:

Formal complaints:

- Acknowledge the complaint in writing, within 3 working days of receipt (except for complaints referred to our insurers or by a solicitor). The acknowledgement will include the name of the person who is dealing with the complaint and a reference number.
- Provide a full response to the complaint within 10 working days from the date of the acknowledgement letter. If the issue is complex and needs further time to resolve we will keep the customer informed.
- Formal Stage two- if the customer remains unhappy with the way their complaint has been resolved they can appeal to a panel hearing. The appeal must be made by the complainant within 6 weeks of the formal complaint response being made.
- The appeal will be acknowledged in writing within 3 working days of receipt.
- The complainant will be invited to a panel hearing within 10 working days of their appeal being made, with an appeal hearing date no later than 6 weeks of the appeal request.

When a complaint is made regarding a defect a response will be made within 10 working days outlining the actions to be taken with the developers to resolve the issues. Updates will be provided by the development team to the complainant every 21 days thereafter.

If a complainant has exhausted all stages of the **bpha** review process and are still dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, the following independent bodies can be contacted:

- Housing Ombudsman
- Supporting People
- Financial Services Ombudsman

Compliments:

bpha will acknowledge all compliments and keep a record of these. Where a compliment relates to a specific individual or team, the feedback will be communicated to them.

Complaint outcomes

- **bpha** will inform all customers of the outcome of their complaint.
- **bpha** may use mediation services at any stage of the complaint investigation if this will improve the chance of reaching a satisfactory response to a complaint.
- If appropriate the customer will be offered compensation, considered on a case by case basis. If the complaint is in debt to **bpha** financial compensation will be credited to their account.
- In the event the complainant has accepted compensation no further escalation of the complaint will be allowed.

Compensation

Where a customer may feel they have suffered inconvenience, loss or disturbance as a result of **bpha's** actions it may be appropriate to award compensation.

Please see complaints compensation policy for further information.

Unreasonable, persistent or vexatious complainants

bpha aims to deal fairly, honestly and transparently with people making a complaint. However complaints may be considered to be unreasonable, persistent or vexatious in the following circumstances:

- Frequent complaints about a variety of different minor issues
- Unreasonable demands with regards to timescales, information requests and specifying who should be dealing with the complaint
- Recurring complaints with only slight amendments
- Seeking an unrealistic outcome
- Unacceptable and threatening behaviour towards employees or employees of partner agencies

In all cases the substance of the complaint will be investigated to ensure there are no valid issues still to be addressed.

In cases of unreasonable, persistent or aggressive complaints the issue will be resolved outside the formal complaints system and a sanction may be imposed upon approval from a Head of Service.

The particular sanction(s) applied will be dependent on the level and severity of the unacceptable behaviour. Please refer to the Accompanied Visits, Persistent and Vexatious Complainants procedure for implementation of sanctions. Further restrictions relating to contact with the complainant may also be considered.

Examples of sanctions:

- Complaint only accepted and responded to in writing
- Complainant given one point of contact at **bpha**

C Regulatory and legal considerations

bpha will comply with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements in managing its complaints processes.

Complaints will be dealt with in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Complaint details may be passed to our insurers.

D Monitoring, reviews and evaluation

- A performance report will be sent to Heads of Service on a monthly basis. A summary of complaints will be reported to **bpha** customer complaints panel, Service Improvement Panel (SIP) and SMT.
- **bpha** is committed to monitoring, identifying trends through root cause analysis and learning from complaints.
- Compliments will be recorded and reported as appropriate.

E Associated documents and procedures

- Have Your Say booklet– A guide to making a comment or complaint about **bpha**'s services.
- Feedback procedure
- Compensation procedure
- Compliment and Suggestions booklet
- Accompanied Visits and Persistent and Vexatious Complaints procedure

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Responsible	Complaints Manager
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