

Compliments and Complaints Policy – QC001

1. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 We are committed to providing a good service to all customers but recognise that sometimes people will have cause for dissatisfaction with our service and will wish to make a complaint. Alternatively, we may have exceeded their expectation and customers may want to send recognition of our great service and will want to send a compliment.
- 1.2 This policy sets out our approach to addressing complaints and compliments and applies to any customer or stakeholder who is in receipt of or affected by our services, procedures or the work of our contractors and agents.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 We welcome complaints and compliments as a means of providing valuable feedback about what we do. Our complaints and compliments policy is designed to be easy for everyone to use. We want complaints to be dealt with fairly, impartially and in a timely manner and to use them to identify opportunities to improve our services and customer satisfaction.
- 2.2 We comply with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements in managing our complaints processes.

3. HOW WE DELIVER THE COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

- 3.1 A **compliment** is an expression of satisfaction about a service provided by any part, or representative, of bpha made by a customer.
- 3.2 A **complaint** is any expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by bpha, our staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual, resident or group of residents.
- 3.3 For the purposes of this policy a complaint is not:
 - a service request
 - matters for which there is an alternative route, for example an appeal against an application review
 - dissatisfaction with a correctly applied bpha policy
 - where legal proceedings have been issued in a legal action
- 3.4 Both compliments and complaints can be made by telephone, letter, e-mail, face to face, visiting a bpha office, via our website and on social media.

3.5 SERVICE REQUESTS

- 3.5.1 We distinguish between a request for a service and a complaint about a service. Service requests are only treated as a complaint if we have failed to deal appropriately with the initial request.
- 3.5.2 Requests for service that are commonly confused with a complaint can include:
 - reporting a repair
 - a request for information or an explanation of a policy, practice or decision
 - requests to review a service charge
 - matters referred to bpha insurers
 - report of anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance



4. RECEIVING/LOGGING COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

4.1 COMPLIMENTS

4.1.1 A compliment may be made about an individual officer, team or a service. When a compliment is received, it is recorded and our Complaints Manager will send the compliment to the appropriate manager who will then ensure that the individual is aware of the compliment.

4.2 COMPLAINTS

4.2.1 WHO CAN COMPLAIN?

- 4.2.1.1 We will consider a complaint about our services, or the work of our contractors and agents, from any customer or stakeholder who is in receipt of, or affected by, a service provided by bpha. We encourage complainants to contact bpha within 6 weeks of experiencing the service failure and will not normally consider a complaint made more than 6 months after the event.
- 4.2.1.2 Complainants may ask a friend, relative or an advocacy service to make a complaint on their behalf. We will ask for the customer's written permission before we deal with anyone else.
- 4.2.1.3 Anonymous complaints will be investigated and dealt with as far as possible in the same way as other complaints.
- 4.2.1.4 Once a complaint has been raised any further or unrelated issues to the original complaint will be dealt with as a new complaint.
- 4.2.1.5 If required, we can arrange an interpreter through a number of different methods including a bi-lingual bpha employee, a telephone interpreter or a sign language service.

4.2.2 HOW TO COMPLAIN

- 4.2.2.1 Complaints can be made by telephone, letter, e-mail, face to face, visiting a bpha office, using a complaint form via our website and on social media.
- 4.2.2.2 We will always attempt to speak to the customer in person, unless they have requested an alternative method of communication.
- 4.2.2.3 Making a complaint will not have an adverse effect on any other services that a customer receives from us.
- 4.2.2.4 If at any point during the complaints process you are dissatisfied with how your complaint is being handled you can contact the Complaints Manager at info@bpha.org.uk or by telephone on 0330 100 0272.
- 4.2.2.5 We expect our customers and stakeholders to be reasonable and to behave appropriately. If a complainant demonstrates unreasonable or threatening behaviour, we may progress the complaint based on the use of documentary evidence only, or through representation via a third party.

4.2.3 COMPLAINT PROCESS

4.2.3.1 When we receive an expression of dissatisfaction, we will always try to resolve it as quickly as possible and at the first point of contact. If this is not possible, we will log and acknowledge it as a complaint.

4.2.4 COMPLAINT

- 4.2.4.1 We will aim to resolve the complaint as quickly as possible by making enquiries and carrying out investigations. The complaint will be responded to by a senior employee ("complaint handler") from the team providing the service to which the complaint relates. Their name and contact details will be confirmed to the customer within one working day.
- 4.2.4.2 The Complaint Handler will contact the customer within three working days to gain a better understanding of the issues and the customer's expectations prior to investigation and/or to





explain the steps we intend to take to put things right. They will also agree arrangements for providing updates and a preferred method of communication with the customer.

- 4.2.4.3 We will work with the customer to ensure they are satisfied with the resolution of their complaint and may use mediation services at any point of the complaint investigation if this will improve the chance of reaching a satisfactory resolution. In most cases we expect to provide a full written response to a complaint within 10 working days. If the issue is complex and needs further time to resolve, we will keep the customer informed.
- 4.2.4.4 If a complaint concerns the behaviour of a bpha employee, they will be informed of the complaint and will not be directly involved in conducting the investigation.
- 4.2.4.5 Once the complaint has been resolved the complaint will be closed. If the customer is not satisfied with our response to their complaint and would like to appeal our decision(s) they should inform us within one week of our final decision being made.

4.2.5 APPEAL

- 4.2.5.1 A Head of Service will review the complaint with the Complaint Handler and contact the customer within seven working days to discuss any issues highlighted in the complaint, the actions taken to conclude it and, if possible, to agree a solution. The customer can request the assistance or support of a resident member of Resolve, bpha’s Customer Complaints Group.
- 4.2.5.2 If the complaint is still unresolved, an appeal hearing will be held within 20 working days. The appeals panel will be made up of a Head of Service, the Complaints Manager and, if the customer wishes, two residents from Resolve, the bpha Customer Complaints Group who take advisory roles on the panel. If required a technical lead will also attend. The Head of Service will issue their response to the appeal within 10 working days.
- 4.2.5.3 This is the final internal stage of our complaints process.

4.3 THE OMBUDSMAN

- 4.3.1 If a customer has exhausted all stages of the bpha review process and is still dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they can contact the following independent bodies:
 - Housing Ombudsman - for disputes involving tenants and leaseholders of social landlords.
 - Property Ombudsman - for disputes between consumers and property agents.
 - Financial Services Ombudsman - for disputes between consumers and businesses that provide financial services.

4.4 COMPENSATION

- 4.4.1 Where a customer feels they have suffered inconvenience, loss or disturbance as a result of bpha’s actions it may be appropriate to award compensation. Our approach to compensation is set out in our Payments and Incentives Policy available on our website or on request. In the event the customer has accepted compensation no further escalation of the complaint will be allowed.

4.5 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 4.5.1 We will handle your information in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. Complaint details may be passed to our insurers.

4.6 UNREASONABLE, PERSISTENT OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANTS

- 4.6.1 Complaints may be considered to be unreasonable, persistent or vexatious in the following circumstances:
 - misuse of the complaints policy and process





- 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

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

4.6.3 In cases of unreasonable, persistent or aggressive complaints the issue will be resolved outside the formal complaints system and a sanction may be imposed subject to approval from a Head of Service. The sanction(s) applied will depend on the level and severity of the unacceptable behaviour. Further restrictions relating to contact with the complainant may also be considered.

5. ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION, NATIONAL STANDARDS AND REGULATION

5.1 Localism Act 2011.

5.2 Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing.

6. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

6.1 bpha Complaints Leaflet

6.2 Payments and Incentives Policy

6.3 Data Protection Policy

7. MONITORING, REVIEWS AND EVALUATION

7.1 bpha is committed to monitoring, identifying trends through root cause analysis and learning from complaints. Complaints will be recorded and fed back to employees and the relevant service area with a view to influencing service delivery.

7.2 A performance report will be sent to Heads of Service on a monthly basis and a quarterly summary of complaints will be reported to Resolve, the bpha customer complaints group, Senior Management Team and Executive Leadership Team.

7.3 Compliments and suggestions will be recorded and reported as appropriate.

7.4 This policy will be kept up to date and amended accordingly to reflect any changes in legislation, standards and guidelines.

7.5 The policy update is scheduled for a one-year period and will also be reviewed as legislative changes are put in place.

Approved by	SMT
Date approved	February 2020
Owner	Quality and Assurance Manager
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