



# COMPLAINTS POLICY



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Accent Housing: Complaints Policy 220922 v3.0

# Complaints Policy

**Document Owner:** Rachael Walsh – Director of Strategy, Insight & Communications



**Author:** Rachael Walsh – Director of Strategy, Insight & Communications

Version History					
Version No	3.0	Doc ID (if applicable):			
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<b>Audience:</b> Customers/colleagues/auditors/homeowners					
<b>Strategic Theme:</b> Personal Customer Experience					
<b>Approval Route:</b> Customer Experience Committee					
<b>Policy Key Controls</b> (These are key controls relevant to this policy that must always be adhered to):					
1. Follow Accent's Complaints Handling Procedure					
2. Adherence to the escalation stages and associated timescales for handling complaints					
3. Awareness and adherence to the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Handling Code					
4.					
5.					
6.					
VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	NEXT REVIEW DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR
V1.0	Claire Stone – EDCEX (& CEC)	26/11/2020	26/11/2021	New	Callie Lancaster
V2.0	Customer Experience Committee 01/02/2022	07/01/2022	07/01/2023	Change of template	Gavin Houghton
V3.0	Customer Experience Committee 19/10/2022	22/09/2022	22/09/2023	New owner/updated template & Housing Ombudsman Policy Update	Rachael Walsh

**Purpose:** Our aim is to; continuously improve the quality of the services we provide, improve our relationships with customers and operate within the regulatory and statutory framework.

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## 1. Introduction

Everyone at Accent Housing is responsible for delivering an excellent customer experience. Customer Satisfaction is one of our key measures of success as an Organisation.

We recognise that from time to time, things can go wrong, and this policy outlines what we will do to put things right.

A customer does not have to say they want to make a complaint for their feedback to be dealt with in line with this policy.

Diversity and Inclusion is part of the fabric of our organisation, and therefore we will do our very best to ensure that we can meet our customers' diverse needs. If you have specific needs, please do let us know and we will do our best to accommodate.

WEBSITE: <https://www.accentgroup.org/about-us/diversity-and-inclusion/>

## 2. Scope

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

Examples of complaints include:

- Failure to attend a scheduled appointment
- Failure to meet our repairs service standards (e.g. Timescales)
- Failure to keep to a commitment (call back, visit, send something out, provide information)
- Failure to deliver a paid for service charge
- Failure to provide correct charging information

We do not class 'service requests' as a complaint.

Example:

A customer is unhappy because their fence is broken. This would only follow the complaints policy if, for example, the customer raised the issue with us, and we failed to fix the broken fence within a timely manner.

We do not class 'Anti-Social Behaviour' as complaints. If the customer raises a complaint about their neighbour, this will be dealt with in accordance with our ASB Policy.

Example: A customer complains their neighbour is consistently playing loud music at 2am. This would only follow the complaints policy if, for example, the customer

raised the issue with us, and they were unhappy about the way we handled the case.

### 3. References

Accent Policies and Procedures can be found in the [Corporate Library](#).

- Equality Act 2010
- Accent Housing: Complaints Handling Procedure

### 4. How to make a complaint

We want to make it easy for our customers to tell us they're not happy with our services so there are lots of ways to make a complaint.

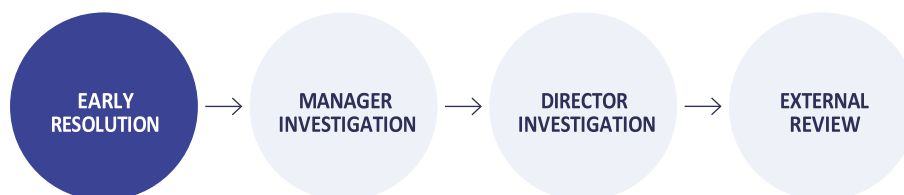
- Online: [www.accentgroup.org/contact-us/comments-complaints/](http://www.accentgroup.org/contact-us/comments-complaints/)
- Phone: 0345 678 0555
- Social Media: Facebook (Accent Housing) and Twitter (@AccentHousing)
- Through an Accent member of staff
- Writing to us: Charlestown House, Acorn Park Industrial Estate, Charlestown, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD17 7SW

We recognise and value the diversity of our communities. We aim to reduce barriers to ensure that everyone has equal access to our complaints service. We are committed to treating everyone fairly, so we comply with all relevant legislation under the Equality Act 2010.

Where an expression of dissatisfaction is received via social media, Accent will respond, usually by directing the complainant to the private/direct messaging service to ensure any confidential details aren't shared online. Once the details have been obtained, we ensure a complaint is logged and the complainant is taken through our complaints process.

We can only resolve a customer complaint if they provide us with all the relevant information and are clear about what they want us to do to resolve the matter. We cannot investigate anonymous complaints, but these may be kept on record.

### 5. Complaint stage – Early Resolution



#### Acknowledgement

We aim to acknowledge and/or discuss the matter with the customer within 24 hours.

### **Response Times**

We always aim to resolve the issue straightaway, however there will be instances where we cannot resolve on first point of contact, and we will need some time to investigate. A formal complaint should be raised if an issue cannot be immediately resolved; if the customer has raised the same issue on three separate occasions; or if the customer requests a formal complaint to be raised.

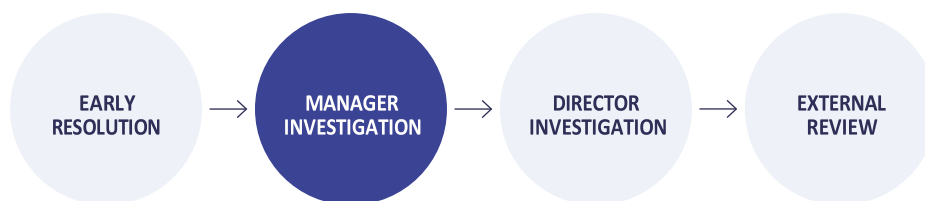
### **Case Closure**

We will close the case and send a complaint response to the customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when any actions to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned and updates communicated to the customer.

### **Customer not satisfied with the response.**

The customer can ask for a manager to review the case. The customer will be asked to explain the reason why they're still not satisfied and what their expectations are.

## 6. Complaint stage – Manager Investigation



### **Acknowledgement**

The manager investigating the case will aim to acknowledge and/or discuss the matter with the customer within 24 hours.

### **Investigation**

We aim to respond to the customer with what actions we will take to resolve, within 5 working days.

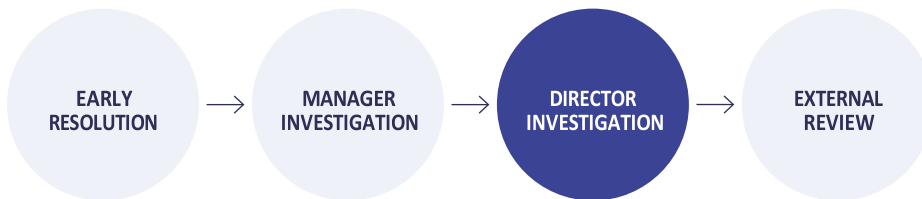
### **Case Closure**

We will close the case and send a complaint response to the customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when any actions needed to address the issue are completed. Once the case is closed, the customer may receive a survey asking for feedback on how the case was handled.

### **Customer not satisfied with the response.**

The customer can ask for a Director to review the case. The customer will be asked to explain the reason why they're still not satisfied and what their expectations are.

## 7. Complaint Stage – Director Investigation



### **Acknowledgement**

The Director investigating the case will aim to acknowledge and/or discuss the matter with the customer within 24 hours.

### **Investigation**

We aim to respond to the customer with what actions we will take to resolve, within 5 working days.

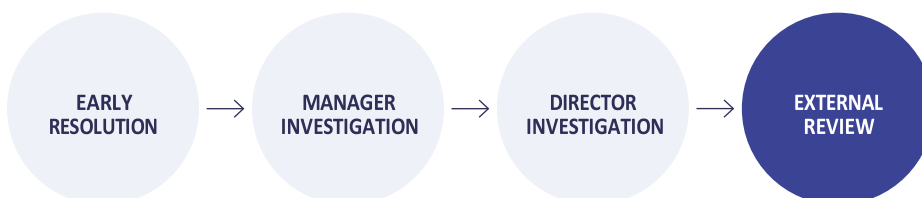
### **Case Closure**

We will close the case and send a complaint response to the customer when the answer to the complaint is known, not when any actions needed to address the issue are completed. Once the case is closed, the customer may receive a survey asking for feedback on how the case was handled.

### **Customer not satisfied with the response.**

Director Investigation is the last stage within our internal process. Once a customer has been through the internal process, they have the right to refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service. DOMUS Services customers should go to the Property Ombudsman.

## 8. Complaint Stage – External review



Although we will make every effort to resolve complaints, if the customer is still unhappy after following our internal process, they can ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to review the complaint. Domus Services customers should go to the Property Ombudsman.

### **The Housing Ombudsman**

Customers can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point during the complaint process. It cannot investigate a complaint whilst it is going through our internal complaints procedure however the Ombudsman may be able to help the customer to reach a resolution with us.

#### **Contact Details**

Housing Ombudsman Service  
81 Aldwych  
London, WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

E-mail: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Online complaint form: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/>

### **The Property Ombudsman (DOMUS Customers)**

The Property Ombudsman will only consider complaints if they have been through our internal complaints process and a final response has been given, or if it's been more than eight weeks since the customer first made the complaint.

#### **Contact details**

The Property Ombudsman Service  
Milford House  
43-55 Milford St  
Salisbury SP1 2BP

Telephone: 01722 333306

E-mail: [admin@tpos.co.uk](mailto:admin@tpos.co.uk)

Online complaint form: <https://www.tpos.co.uk/consumers/how-to-make-a-complaint>



## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Exclusions to this policy

#### **Complaints relating to Services we do not provide**

We will not accept complaints about other landlords, local authorities, government policies or companies that do not provide services on our behalf.

#### **Complaints relating to personal property**

We cannot accept complaints about damage to personal property unless it has been caused by something we have done. We advise you take out Home Contents Insurance in the event of any unforeseen incidents.

#### **Legal and/or insurance proceedings**

Where a complainant has started court action or an insurance claim against us in respect of the specific issue(s) covered by their complaint, the complaint will be removed/excluded from our complaints process.

#### **Mediation**

If a referral for mediation is in progress or has been made, a complaint will be put on hold until the outcome of mediation is known. Subject to the outcome of mediation, the case owner of the complaint will assess whether it is appropriate to resume the complaints process.

#### **Repeat complainants**

If the issue has already been through our internal process, we reserve the right to stop the complaint investigation and close the complaint. The customer has the right for their complaint to be reviewed externally; please refer 'Complaint Stage – External Review'.

#### **Unacceptable behaviour**

We reserve the right to refuse to engage with individuals who exhibit behaviour which is abusive or threatening.

