

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

We know that we can only fulfil our vision by placing our residents at the centre of everything we do.

We also understand that there are occasions where we may not get it right. This procedure explains how you can make a complaint, what you can expect from our response and what to do if you're not happy with the outcome.

Our approach to complaints

- We understand that we will not get it right all the time. We will treat complaints as an opportunity to improve our services or our communication.
- We define a complaint as 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.
- Any person making a complaint will be treated in line with our Customer Service Standards and Customer Feedback Procedure.
- A record will be kept of every complaint. These records will be reviewed by the Head of Operations on a quarterly basis and reported to the Organisational Development Committee, a sub-group of Elim's Board, on a quarterly basis.
- These reviews will be used as opportunities to identify improvements to our service delivery and communication. We will publish the learning from our complaint handling in our annual report each year.

The complaints procedure

When you first contact us, please make it clear that you are making a complaint. The member of staff you speak to will acknowledge this. In order to resolve a complaint, we will you to let us know the following:

- What you are complaining about.
- How you would like to see your complaint resolved.

The member of staff you speak to will try and resolve your complaint immediately. In some cases, further investigation may be required and this will not be possible. You will receive an acknowledgment of your complaint within 5-working days of making the complaint. If it has been resolved during this period, this acknowledgment will detail the resolution.

Stage 1:

If further investigation is required, the complaint will be passed to an appropriate Manager. This Manager will conduct an investigation and will respond to you within 10-working days of the complaint being made.

This formal response will be provided in writing and will contain:

- Further confirmation of the complaint and how you wish to see it resolved.
- Details of the investigation they have conducted.
- A decision as to whether the complaint has been upheld or not.
- Any actions we are taking as a result of the investigation findings.
- Details of what to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, then you would follow the escalation instructions and proceed to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Escalation

When you escalate your complaint, please explain whether you are escalating because a) you disagree with the decision not to uphold your complaint, or b) even though your complaint was upheld, you disagree with the outcome.

Once a complaint has been escalated, it will be passed to a member of the Operational Leadership Team of greater seniority than the Manager who conducted the investigation at Stage 2. The escalation will be acknowledged in writing within 2-working days of receipt and a deadline – no more than 20-working days from the date of escalation – provided for a final response.

The Manager will then conduct a review of the handling of the complaint, the investigation and the outcome. The purpose of the review will be to determine the following:

- Whether the investigation was thorough and proportionate to the complaint.
- Whether the decision to uphold or not uphold the complaint was correct with reference to Elim's policies and procedures.
- Whether the outcome appropriately reflected the findings of the investigation.

The outcome of this review will be communicated in writing by the deadline provided. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your escalated complaint, you should raise the complaint with the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can be contacted by phone on 0300 1113000 or through their website: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>.

When the Complaints Procedure may not be used Elim will always try and resolve complaints in accordance with the procedure above, however there are certain circumstances where we may decide not to follow this procedure:

- Where a complainant is abusive or threatening towards staff when making a complaint.
- Where a complainant makes repeated complaints about similar or linked issues where these issues are being or have already been investigated.
- Where an unreasonable period of time has elapsed between incidents to which a complaint refers and the complaint being made.
- Where legal proceedings relating to the subject of the complaint have been entered into.
- Where a complainant is making unreasonable demands of staff time and resources that are out of proportion to the complaint.

In any case where a decision is taken not to respond to a complaint in accordance with this procedure, the complainant will be notified in writing by a member of the Operational Leadership Team with a full explanation given.