

Complaint Policy (Summary)

Raven is committed to providing a high quality service for its customers. The purpose of this summary is to provide information on how we resolve customer complaints in an honest, transparent and visible way. It will demonstrate that we listen to our customers and make it easy to tell us about a service failure.

Scope of policy

This policy covers customer complaints. Raven defines a customer as a tenant, leaseholder, anyone applying for a Raven home, and any person, agency, partner or organisation seeking information from us or affected by our services.

Complaints about contractors and organisations that Raven holds a contract or service level agreement with, will be dealt with through the appropriate method contained in the relevant contract or agreement.

Raven defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by Raven or with something Raven may or may not have done'. It is important to differentiate between a complaint and a request to put things right.

How we will deal with your complaint

GET ON TRACK - In order to try and resolve complaints as quickly as possible we may initially deal with the problem or service failure under our 'GET ON TRACK' process.

We aim to resolve the failure in service and get it back on track within five working days. A GET ON TRACK complaint is dealt with much quicker than a FORMAL complaint as we won't normally carry out an investigation or send formal letters.

The complainant will receive an agreed plan of actions and timescales to deal with their complaint.

GET ON TRACK can be bypassed if a resident wishes to raise a FORMAL complaint immediately. They must however provide an explanation as to why they do not wish to use the GET ON TRACK process first.

GET ON TRACK complaints can be raised and dealt with by all front line staff.

FORMAL COMPLAINT - If a customer is unhappy with a service we have provided or we have been unable to resolve an issue to their satisfaction under our GET ON TRACK process - they can raise a FORMAL complaint.

Complainants are expected to raise a FORMAL complaint within six months of the incident, which led to the complaint being made. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the time limit be extended (i.e. because of ill health).

A manager will investigate the complaint and offer a face-to-face meeting with the complainant to discuss the issue. If a face-to-face meeting is not required, the complainant will receive a phone call from the investigation manager within 48 hours of making a formal complaint.

The investigation manager will provide a written response within 15 days of receiving the complaint and will keep the complainant informed of the progress until it's resolved.

We aim to fully resolve a complaint within 30 calendar days where it is the responsibility of Raven or one of our contractors. If longer is required, we will contact the complainant to agree a new timescale.

The written response will include where applicable:

- A well evidenced, user friendly response with the detail behind decisions/actions
- Agreed plan of actions by Raven to resolve the issue
- Any remedial action that includes reviewing or changing a decision on the service given to an individual complainant; revising published material; revising procedures, policies or guidance to prevent the same thing happening again; training or supervising staff; or any combination of these
- Financial compensation for direct or indirect financial loss, loss of opportunity, inconvenience, distress, or any combination of these and set out in our Compensation Policy (available on request)

Our Complaint Policy differentiates between those who have or have had a contractual relationship with Raven and those who do not / have not – i.e. those with a rent or service charge and those who may have an interest but do not pay a contribution towards any form of management service.

Right to Appeal

A tenant, leaseholder or party with a contractual relationship with Raven is able to raise a FORMAL complaint and then has the right to APPEAL stage, although the complaint should be in relation to the service defined in their contract. Relatives of a deceased tenant or leaseholder complaining on their behalf have the right to both stages.

No Right to Appeal

Complainants without a contractual relationship with Raven can raise a FORMAL complaint but they do not have option to take their complaint to APPEAL.

APPEAL - If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their FORMAL complaint, they may be able to APPEAL under specific grounds set out below. We will tell customers that this request must be made within four weeks of Raven's final response letter at the

FORMAL complaint stage and only after all the agreed actions at FORMAL stage have been completed.

We require confirmation why a customer wishes to appeal and the outcome they are seeking.

Where this is offered, we expect a complainant to participate in mediation as part of the formal complaint process before allowing an APPEAL to discuss how a resolution may to be reached.

The only grounds on which an appeal will be considered are:

- a) There has been a material and significant administrative error in the information received and considered; or
- b) The complaint has not been conducted in accordance with Raven's Compliant Policy or
- c) The complainant has been prevented from attending or submitting evidence by illness or other good cause that related to personal circumstances
- d) There is evidence to suggest that a policy or procedure is incorrect in terms of government legislation

The APPEAL will be heard by a panel which will normally include a Board Member (Chair), a Raven customer (usually a member of FALCON resident's panel or scrutiny panel), and a Raven Director who has not been significantly involved in the complaint.

To help the Panel consider the complaint, both Raven Officers and the complainant are expected to submit their case at least one week in advance of the Panel Hearing, to give the panel members an opportunity to consider the issues in advance of the meeting itself.

The Chair of panel will notify the complainant of the outcome of the appeal normally within seven days of the hearing. In the event of an absence of consensus, the Chair's decision is final.

APPEAL stage will not consider any issues that were not included in the original FORMAL complaint.

The decision at appeal stage will signify the end of Raven's internal complaint process.

If the complainant wishes to pursue their complaint after completing Raven's internal complaint process, they can contact the following:

Designated Person - A Designated Person can be a local councillor (not County or Parish), or the local MP where identified as the Designated Person. The Designated Person can try to resolve the complaint locally or refer the case to the Housing Ombudsman, if the complainant requests. The Designated Person will not adjudicate or decide upon the case – they will try to find a resolution.

Housing Ombudsman Service - The complainant can wait eight weeks after completion of Raven's internal process and contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly. A Designated Person can refer the case to the Housing Ombudsman Service more quickly.

Raven will tell customers about this and the Ombudsman service. However, the Ombudsman will decide whether they accept the case, and will apply a criteria agreed with them. Customers will be told of their right to be accompanied by a friend or advocate, at their own expense, at any interview or panel. The Housing Ombudsman Service is available to tenants/leaseholders and home buyers only. They will only consider cases where Raven's own internal complaints process has been exhausted.

Complaints relating to Raven's Contractors - we require any contractor providing services on our behalf to comply with this policy by:

- Informing Raven of any complaint they receive directly from one of our customers
- Recording and responding to customer feedback when required
- Providing us with information relating to a complaint when requested
- Assisting Raven with complaint investigations as appropriate
- Adhering to agreed timescales

Dealing with unacceptable behaviour during the complaints process

In circumstances where complainants are thought to be unreasonable, unreasonably persistent, or even confrontational, Raven may decide that this behaviour may affect the way services are provided to other customers; or that it is having a significant or detrimental impact on staff. In these cases, a Director will make a decision on the most appropriate way to manage and conclude the complaint. Examples may include restricting the volume or method of contact, restricting who may be contacted, or taking enforcement action if necessary. The complainant will also be informed of the reason for the decision.

COMPLIANCE

Staff will not be involved in the investigation of a particular complaint if he/she is named in the complaint, or has been directly involved in matters within the complaint that may prejudice a fair investigation.

A full version of Raven's official Complaint Policy is available on request by calling 0300 123 3399 or emailing Raven@ravenht.org.uk