

Complaint and Appeal Procedure

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Document number: HGP-PR-4091 Version 2.0

Approval

Procedure owner: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

Business Unit: Housing Plus

Approved by: Executive Manager, Specialist Community Services

Date approved: 07/07/2022

Review date: 07/07/2024

1. Purpose

1. This procedure is intended to give clear and concise guidance to staff and tenants/residents, as well as other relevant stakeholders on the lodgement of complaint and appeals to ensure timely and appropriate management of all complaint and appeals processes.

2. Scope

1. This is a Housing Plus (HGP) procedure and is applicable to all staff, volunteers, tenants/residents of the service.

3. Procedure

1. HGP ensures that tenants/residents are made aware of their rights and responsibilities at move in and that additional information and guidance is available on request at all times.
2. If the complainant has a complaint about their neighbour or housemate they will be directed to contact HGP in the first instance at housing.service@svdpwa.org.au. This process is managed separately under the Tenancy Complaint Management Procedure. If HGP are not able to remedy the issue to the complainant's satisfaction they are welcome to follow the formal complaint/appeal procedure outlined below.
3. If the complainant has any concerns or issues relating to their tenancy they will be directed to speak to the MHGP. If the issue is not able to be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, they are welcome to follow the formal complaint/appeal procedure outlined below.

Principles

4. HGP recognises and respects the rights of tenants/residents, their support services and all other relevant stakeholders to lodge a complaint or appeal.
5. HGP endeavours to treat tenants/residents fairly and respectfully at all times and supports the process of finding a resolution for complaints and appeals, rather than solely providing a response.
6. HGP believes complaints and appeals provide the opportunity for learning, to review practices, make improvements and changes to the service where applicable.
7. HGP ensures all complaints and appeals are dealt with promptly and fairly.
8. The HGP Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure is open and accessible for tenants/residents and makes them aware of their right to appeal any decisions made and ability to lodge a complaint during their tenancy. For tenants/residents who face barriers to lodging complaints/appeals, HGP will support them to access assistance as required.
9. HGP promotes clear and transparent communication throughout the complaint and appeals review process.

Lodging a Complaint/Appeal electronically

10. To lodge a complaint or Appeal email the Complaints Officer at SCSComplaints.Appeals@svdpwa.org.au and request a copy of HGP Complaints and Appeal Form.
11. All appeals must be lodged within 30 days of being notified of a decision to which the appeal relates.
12. Complete the form and return to the Complaints Officer at SCSComplaints.Appeals@svdpwa.org.au or by mail to SCS Complaints/Appeals Officer, Vinnies Specialist Community Services, 2 Bayley St, Woodbridge, WA 6056. If the complainant requires assistance with completing the form, staff will encourage them to seek assistance from their support worker.
13. The Complaints Officer may need to follow up with the complainant for additional details or to clarify information about the complaint/appeal they submitted.
14. The complainant will receive an email auto-generated response the complaint/appeal acknowledging its receipt. The email will detail an aim to resolve complaints/appeals within 20 working days.
15. The Complaints and Appeals Process commences within 48 hours of receipt of the complaint and/or appeal and, will be reviewed in line with the matrix below and may be referred to the CEO at Management's discretion.
16. If the complaint is related to a staff member the complaint will not be managed by the staff member the complaint is about. Equally any appeal will not be managed by the person who made the decision.

Complaint Type	Reviewed by
Complaint about HGP service provision or staff member	Manager Housing Plus
Complaint about MHGP	Executive Manager SCS

4. Roles and responsibilities

1. The Manager, Housing Plus is responsible for maintaining the currency of this procedure.
2. Society representatives are required to adhere to this procedure. Failure to comply may be considered a breach of our procedures and may result in disciplinary action.

5. Review

1. This procedure will be reviewed at least every two years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the SCS Management Team or the Executive Manager SCS.

6. Further assistance

1. Society personnel should speak with their Manager regarding any questions about the implementation of this procedure.

7. References

References made in this procedure are:

1. SCS-PP-4004 Compliments and Complaints – Client/Consumer Policy
2. HGP-PR-4114 Tenancy Complaint Management Procedure
3. HGP Complaints and Appeals Register
4. HGP-FM-#### Complaints and Appeals Form

8. Related documents and legislation

Related documents and legislation at the time of approval are:

1. Complaint Management Framework for Community Housing Providers 2016, *NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc and Registrar Community Housing*
2. Freedom of Information Act 1992, Office of the Attorney General, *Government of Western Australia*.
3. Guidelines for Complaint Management in organisations, Appendix H Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014
4. Privacy Act 1998, *Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Federal Government of Australia*
5. Residential Tenancies Act 1987, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
6. Residential Tenancies (COVID-19 Response) Bill 2020, *Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, Western Australia*
7. SCS-PP-4018 SCS Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

9. Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
1.0	EM, SCS	31/08/2020	Initial version
1.1	EM, SCS	01/12/2021	Conversion to new template and change of document number to HGP
2.0	Manager, HP	07/07/2022	Content review and update

10. Definitions

Term	Definition
Appeal	Is a request for a review of a decision relating to the complainant's tenancy. This includes the issue of a breach or termination, offer of accommodation, modifications, transfer, pets or tenant liability. <i>(Complaint Management Framework for Community Housing Providers, Definitions, Page 10 NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc and Registrar Community Housing, 2016).</i>
Complaints Officer	The designated person responsible for receipt and management of all complaints. This position is held by a staff member not directly involved with Service Delivery of any SCS service
Complaint	A formal expression of dissatisfaction made (to HGP) with the standard or the type of its services, staff, contractors or the handling of an informal complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. <i>(Guidelines for Complaint Management in organisations, Appendix H Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014)</i>
Complainant	The tenant or other relevant stakeholder who lodged the complaint or appeal
EM	Executive Manager Specialist Community Services
Feedback	Opinions both positive and negative given (to HGP) about its services. Negative feedback is not considered a complaint and does not require a response unless at the discretion of management. <i>(Complaint Management Framework for Community Housing Providers, Definitions, Page 10 NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc and Registrar Community Housing, 2016).</i>
MHGP	Manager Housing Plus
Tenancy Complaint	a complaint or issue raised by tenants' neighbours, community members, housemates about HGP tenants. These issues can include noise, anti-social behaviour and vandalism and are not considered complaints as they do not relate to dissatisfaction of HGP services. They can however become complaints if the complainant is not satisfied with how HGP manages the issue <i>(Complaint Management Framework for Community Housing Providers, Definitions, Page 10 NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc and Registrar Community Housing, 2016).</i>
Resident	Or "Lodger", A person granted right of occupancy of residential premises in accommodation managed by SVDPWAs Housing Plus, under a Licence to Occupy agreement. This is under conditions other than those provided by the Residential Tenancies Act 1987 (WA) where they are considered 'lodger' under common law or otherwise. Also referred to as Clients/Consumers in other SVDPWA policy and procedures.
Tenant	A person granted right of occupancy of a residential premises in accommodation managed by SVDPWA's Housing Plus under a Residential Tenancy Agreement as per Residential Tenancies

