



COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMMENTS – PP13

1. INTRODUCTION

This complaints, compliments and comments policy outlines our commitment to providing an exceptional service and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. We value your feedback and encourage you to share your experiences, suggestions, and concerns. Whether you've had a positive interaction or encountered a challenge, your input is essential to helping us maintain the highest standards of service.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

At Accommodation Yes, we prioritise open and effective communication with our tenants, their families and the people we work with. We value your feedback as an essential tool for continuous improvement. Whether you have a compliment, a suggestion, or a concern, we are committed to listening and acting. Your input helps us ensure that our services meet and exceed your expectations and Accommodation Yes deliver upon our very own high standards. Accommodation Yes process complaints in line with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code.

3. DEFINITION

At Accommodation Yes, we believe in fostering positive relationships with all those who interact with our organisation, including tenants, their families and friends, carers, and external inquiries. This policy establishes a clear process for addressing concerns, compliments, and suggestions, ensuring that everyone feels valued and heard.

A complaint definition is *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a tenant or group of tenants'*.

A tenant does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. Whenever a tenant expresses dissatisfaction Accommodation Yes will give the tenant a choice to make a complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative will be handled in line with this policy.

A compliment is a polite expression of praise or admiration, and a comment is a verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction



4. PURPOSE

At Accommodation Yes, we are committed to providing a tenant-centered experience. To ensure we are meeting and exceeding expectations, we actively seek feedback through various channels, including the complaints procedure, tenant satisfaction surveys, staff surveys, feedback cards, and other formal and informal methods such as face to face interactions, phone calls and emails. This policy applies to all services and departments within our supported housing service. When referring to a 'manager,' we mean the line manager or most senior manager at Accommodation Yes. Accommodation Yes recognise making a complaint needs to be accessible, therefore Accommodation Yes publicise our complaints policy and procedure on the company website, on noticeboards in all properties and tenant welcome packs.

5. CONTEXT

We prioritise ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure our services consistently meet and exceed industry standards. This includes internal audits for compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman, as well as a focus on gathering and analysing feedback through complaints, comments, and tenant satisfaction surveys. This data helps us identify areas for improvement and maintain a high level of service excellence.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

| CONTENTS OF SECTION | |
|---------------------|--|
| 6.1 | Making your views known |
| 6.2 | Complaints procedure |
| 6.3 | Complaints Stages |
| 6.4 | Putting things right |
| 6.5 | Self-assessment, reporting and compliance |
| 6.6 | Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement |

6.0.1 At Accommodation Yes, we value your input. Complaints, compliments and comments can be made in any way which best suits individual needs, this is inclusive but not limited to using the complaints, comments and compliments form, in writing via email, letter or mobile messaging service, face to face interactions, via telephone, through a family member, friend or third party. This open communication channel helps us to continuously improve and ensure we are meeting your needs. Accommodation Yes acknowledge complaints, compliments and comments in line with this policy.

Accommodation Yes' correspondence to you will be in writing, either via email or a letter. Should a conversation take place Accommodation Yes will follow up in a written format which best suits your needs.




6.1 MAKING YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

- 6.1.1 We attach a great deal of importance to listening to your views on any matters relating to the service you receive from Accommodation Yes. Complaints, compliments and comments can be made through direct contact with Accommodation Yes (face to face, via email, letter or phone call), through a family member, friend or third party, using the complaints and compliments form, using feedback cards, group meetings or the annual tenant satisfaction survey.
- 6.1.2 Accommodation Yes encourages our tenants to make their views known to aid continuous improvement and support Accommodation Yes to deliver the best service possible. Tenant views can be made to any member of Accommodation Yes staff.
- 6.1.3 Should a tenant feel unhappy or would like to complain about any aspect of Accommodation Yes' service, please contact the property operations manager who will acknowledge your complaint and respond appropriately within 24 hours for urgent matters and within 5 days in all other circumstances.
- 6.1.4 A service request made from a tenant to Accommodation Yes requiring action to be taken to put something right such as maintenance requests are not considered as complaints. Service requests are electronically recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. If a complaint is made by a tenant regarding a service request, Accommodation Yes will not stop efforts to resolve the service request.
- 6.1.5 Wherever possible we try to resolve satisfactorily any difficulty or complaint as quickly as we can. However, if you still have a concern please contact us: -

 by letter or in person at 17 Hart Street, Maidstone, ME16 8RA

 by email at darren@accommodation-yes.com

 by telephone on 01622 682535

- 6.1.6 Accommodation Yes will acknowledge receipt of your communication within five working days upon receipt of the communication. Details of the full procedure can be found in section 6.2 complaints procedure.
- 6.1.7 All complaints will be considered by Accommodation Yes on its own merit and Accommodation Yes will accept complaints unless there is a valid reason not to do so which will be evidenced in writing.

Acceptable exclusions for Accommodation yes not accepting complaints are the issues given rise to the complaint happened over twelve months ago, legal proceedings have started, and official papers filed with the court and any matters which are deemed to have been resolved

under the complaints procedure. Accommodation Yes reserve the right to exercise discretion to accept a complaint even if the complaint falls into an excluded category.



6.1.8 Any decision made by Accommodation Yes not to accept a complaint will be made in writing via email or letter and the complainant will be sign posted to the Housing Ombudsman in line with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code.

6.1.9 Tenants can choose to have a representative to deal with their complaint and tenants can be represented throughout the entire complaints process or accompanied at meetings

6.2 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

6.2.1 Accommodation Yes has a single, clear policy for dealing with all complaints covered by this policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman's code for complaint handling. Tenants will not be treated differently based on the nature of their complaint(s).

6.2.2 The timely resolution of issues between Accommodation Yes and tenants is crucial for effective complaint handling. Accommodation Yes will avoid any unnecessary stages or procedures that may delay the process.

6.2.3 Accommodation Yes' complaints procedure has two stages.

6.2.4 If a third party (e.g., a contractor or independent adjudicator) handles a complaint at any stage, it must be incorporated into Accommodation Yes' two-stage complaints process. Tenants will not be required to go through multiple processes.

6.2.5 Accommodation Yes is responsible for ensuring that any third parties involved in handling complaints adhere to the principles outlined in this policy.

6.2.6 When a complaint is logged or escalated, Accommodation Yes will clearly define the complaint and identify the desired outcomes from the tenant's perspective. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the tenant will be asked for clarification.

6.2.7 Accommodation Yes will acknowledge which aspects of a complaint they are responsible for and which they are not. Any areas of uncertainty will be clarified.

6.2.8 At each stage of the complaints process, complaint handlers will:

- Deal with complaints impartially and objectively.
- Give tenants a fair opportunity to present their case.
- Address any potential conflicts of interest.
- Carefully consider all relevant information and evidence.



- 6.2.9 If a response to a complaint will exceed the specified timescales, Accommodation Yes will agree on suitable intervals for keeping tenants informed.
- 6.2.10 Accommodation Yes will make reasonable adjustments for tenants with disabilities, as required by the Equality Act 2010. Records of agreed adjustments and disclosed disabilities will be maintained and regularly reviewed.
- 6.2.11 Accommodation Yes will not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the process unless there are valid reasons for doing so. The reasons will be clearly explained and comply with the provisions set out in section 6.1.4 and 6.1.7 of this policy.
- 6.2.12 A detailed record will be kept of each complaint, including the original complaint, correspondence, supporting documentation, and outcomes at each stage.
- 6.2.13 Anonymous complaints will be investigated using the same procedure and the outcome recorded for official closure, feedback to the relevant manager and/or other relevant party will always be given where it is possible to do so.
- 6.2.14 Tenants will receive (so far as is reasonably practical) assistance to enable them to understand the complaints procedure and advice on where they may obtain such assistance. At all times due regard must be had to The Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR), and no documentation with individual's personal information will be disclosed to a third party without the consent of that individual.
- 6.2.15 If a complaint is of a serious nature, such as abuse or neglect that may require action to protect tenants and notification to Regulators, Local Authority Commissioners or Safeguarding Authority, the Company Director shall be notified immediately.
- 6.2.16 If the complaint is not relevant to Accommodation Yes, every effort will be made to assist the person to make their complaint to the correct person.
- 6.2.17 Tenants and their representatives are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner throughout Accommodation Yes' complaint process. Any behaviour that disrupts the process, threatens the safety or well-being of staff or other tenants, or violates the law will be considered unacceptable.

Unacceptable behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Verbal or physical abuse - This includes threats, intimidation, and harassment.
- Disruptive behaviour - This includes shouting, swearing, and making unreasonable demands.
- Damage to property - This includes damaging property belonging to Accommodation Yes or other tenants.
- Violation of the law: This includes breaking any applicable laws or regulations.



Accommodation Yes reserves the right to take appropriate action to address unacceptable behaviour and retain records accordingly. Please refer to the unreasonable behaviour policy for further information.

6.3 COMPLAINTS STAGES

Stage 1

- 6.3.1 Accommodation Yes will prioritise complaints that can be resolved promptly and may require less investigation and will consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the tenant is vulnerable or at risk.
- 6.3.2 Complaints must be acknowledged by Accommodation Yes, defined, and logged within five working days of receipt.
- 6.3.3 Accommodation Yes will provide a full response to stage 1 complaints within 10 working days after acknowledging the complaint.
- 6.3.4 Extensions to the timescale may be granted for complex complaints but must be justified and communicated by Accommodation Yes. Extensions should not exceed 10 additional working days unless in exceptional circumstances whereby a thorough explanation must be provided to the tenant by Accommodation Yes.
- 6.3.5 Tenants will be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman if an extension is granted.

Web: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/contact-us/>

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Tel: 0300 111 3000

- 6.3.6 Responses to complaints will address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for decisions, referencing relevant policies, laws, and good practices.
- 6.3.7 Additional complaints raised during the investigation may be incorporated into the stage 1 response if related. Otherwise, they will be logged as separate complaints.
- 6.3.8 At the completion of stage 1, Accommodation Yes must provide written confirmation to the tenant, including:
 - The complaint stage
 - The complaint definition
 - The decision on the complaint
 - Reasons for the decision
 - Any remedy offered
 - Outstanding actions
 - Information on escalating to stage 2



Stage 2

- 6.3.9 If a complaint is not resolved to the tenant's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be escalated to stage 2.
- 6.3.10 Escalation requests must be acknowledged by Accommodation Yes and logged within five working days.
- 6.3.11 Tenants will not be required to justify their request for escalation. Accommodation Yes will make reasonable efforts to understand the tenant's concerns to understand why the tenant remains unhappy.
- 6.3.12 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 should be different from the person who handled stage 1.
- 6.3.13 Accommodation Yes must issue a final response to stage 2 complaints within 20 working days, with possible extensions for complex cases which will be communicated to the tenant.
- 6.3.14 Tenants must be provided with the contact details of the Ombudsman if an extension is granted.

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Tel: 0300 111 3000

- 6.3.15 Responses will address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for decisions.
- 6.3.16 Accommodation Yes must provide written confirmation to the tenant at the completion of stage 2, including the same information as listed in stage 1.
- 6.3.17 Stage 2 is Accommodation Yes' final response and should involve all necessary staff members necessary to issue a stage 2 response.
- 6.3.18 At the completion of stage 2, Accommodation Yes must provide written confirmation to the tenant, including:
- The complaint stage
 - The complaint definition
 - The decision on the complaint
 - Reasons for the decision
 - Any remedy offered
 - Outstanding actions
 - Details of how to escalate the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman



6.4 PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

- 6.4.1 When a complaint is upheld, Accommodation Yes must acknowledge the issue and set out the specific actions they have taken or intend to take to rectify the situation. These actions may include:
- Offering an apology
 - Admitting where mistakes were made
 - Providing an explanation, assistance, or reasons for the issue
 - Taking action to address any delays
 - Reconsidering or changing a decision
 - Amending records or adding corrections
 - Providing a financial remedy
 - Modifying policies, procedures, or practices
- 6.4.2 Any remedy offered should be commensurate with the impact the issue had on the tenant. Accommodation Yes can initiate actions to put things right with the tenant at any stage of the complaints process.
- 6.4.3 The remedy offer must clearly outline the specific actions that will be taken and the expected timeline for completion. Accommodation Yes should seek the tenant's agreement whenever possible.
- 6.4.4 Accommodation Yes should consider the guidance provided by the Ombudsman when determining appropriate remedies.

6.5 SELF ASSESSMENT, REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE

- 6.5.1 Accommodation Yes must produce an annual report on their complaint's performance and service improvement. This report should include:
- A self-assessment against this policy to ensure compliance
 - A qualitative and quantitative analysis of complaint handling performance, including a summary of rejected complaints
 - Any findings of non-compliance by the Ombudsman
 - Service improvements implemented based on complaint feedback
 - Any annual reports from the Ombudsman related to the landlord's performance
 - Other relevant reports or publications from the Ombudsman
- 6.5.2 The annual report must be submitted to the landlord's governing body and published on Accommodation Yes' website and communicated in Accommodation Yes' annual report to tenants.
- 6.5.3 The governing body's response to the report should also be published on the website and annual report.



6.5.4 Accommodation Yes must conduct a self-assessment following significant restructuring, mergers, or changes in procedures.

6.5.5 If Accommodation Yes is unable to comply with this policy due to exceptional circumstances, they must inform the Ombudsman, provide information to affected tenants, and publish this information on their website. A timeline for returning to compliance should also be provided.

6.6 SCRUTINY & OVERSIGHT: CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

6.6.1 Accommodation Yes will analyse complaints to identify potential service improvements beyond the individual case.

6.6.2 A positive complaint handling culture is maintained which is essential for effectively resolving disputes. Accommodation Yes will use complaints as a source of information to identify issues and implement positive changes.

6.6.3 Accountability and transparency must be exercised and are key components of a positive complaint handling culture. Accommodation Yes must report on learnings and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as tenants, staff, and relevant parties.

6.6.4 Accommodation Yes shall appoint a senior lead person responsible for complaint handling. This person will assess themes and trends to identify systemic issues, risks, or policy and procedure deficiencies.

6.6.5 A member of the board of directors (or equivalent) should also be appointed as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC).

6.6.6 The MRC should receive regular information on complaints to provide the board with insights into Accommodation Yes' complaint handling performance.

6.6.7 At a minimum, the MRC and governing body should receive:

- Regular updates on complaint volume, categories, outcomes, and performance
- Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaints
- Regular updates on Ombudsman investigations and progress made in addressing severe maladministration findings
- The annual complaints performance and service improvement report

6.6.8 Accommodation Yes must set a standard objective for all relevant employees and third parties regarding complaint handling, emphasising:

- A collaborative and cooperative approach to resolving complaints
- Collective responsibility for identified shortcomings
- Adherence to professional standards for engaging with complaints



The Local Housing Ombudsman looks at complaints about housing providers. It is a free service and the Housing Ombudsman's purpose is to investigate complaints in a fair and independent way – it does not take sides.

If you have a problem with the service Accommodation Yes provides, you should first follow this complaints procedure documented in this policy. If you are still not satisfied, the Housing Ombudsman may be able to help, call 0300 111 3000 or go to the website www.housingombudsman.org.uk