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Complaints Policy and Procedure



Oaklee

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Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope	3
3. Roles and Responsibilities	4
4. Definitions	4
5. Associated documents and References	5
6. Process	5
6.1 How a complaint can be made	5
6.2 Acknowledgement of Complaint	5
6.3 Local Resolution	5
6.4 Official Complaint.....	5
6.5 Residential Tenancies Board.....	6
7. Group, Third Party and Anonymous Complaints.....	7
8. Persistent or Unreasonable Complainants	7
9. Unacceptable actions or behaviour by complainants.....	7
10. Complaints received when Court Action is Pending.....	8
11. How complaints will be Managed.....	8
12. General Information.....	8

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Complaints Policy is to provide a clear, accessible, and transparent framework for addressing expressions of dissatisfaction regarding Oaklee's services, actions, or inactions. This policy ensures that all complaints are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and resolved in a fair and timely manner. Oaklee is committed to using complaints as opportunities for service improvement and increased customer satisfaction.

Oaklee aims to ensure that:

- This Complaints policy is open and accountable and accessible to all of our customers.
- All complaints relating to our service are taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.
- Problems can be resolved informally in the first instance by discussing concerns with the relevant member of staff.
- Where a complainant is unhappy with the initial response, they have the opportunity to appeal to the highest level of authority within Oaklee.
- Every complaint will receive an acknowledgement explaining the action Oaklee has taken or will take.
- Complainants will be encouraged to seek independent support and assistance e.g. Residential Tenancies Board.
- Complainants or people who are the subject of a complaint have a right to be accompanied by a third party in any meetings that they are invited to in relation to the complaint made by or against them.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All complaints made orally or in writing, by any individual, about Oaklee or its staff.
- Complaints relating to any aspect of Oaklee's service delivery.
- Complaints raised through any communication channel, including in person, by phone, in writing, via email, through the website, or via third parties.
- Group, third-party, and anonymous complaints, provided there is enough detail to investigate.
- Complaints that cannot be resolved informally at the first point of contact or that involve serious or complex issues.

Exclusions:

- Matters under active legal proceedings or court action will not be addressed through this complaints process.
- Routine service requests (e.g. repairs or housing enquiries) are handled through Oaklee's Customer Service Centre and not considered complaints under this policy.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Complainants

- Provide clear and concise information about the issue and the desired resolution.
- Respond to requests for further information where necessary.
- Provide support during the investigation and work toward achieving a reasonable resolution.
- Treat Oaklee staff and its representatives with respect throughout the complaint process.

Frontline Staff (e.g., Housing Officers, Call Centre Reps)

- Attempt to resolve complaints informally at first contact.
- Escalate the matter when informal/local resolution is not possible or the issue is serious/complex.
- Ensure the complaint is passed to the Compliance Team with all necessary documentation.

Compliance Team

- Record formal complaints in the complaints management tracker and acknowledge the complaints.
- Assign complaints to the appropriate business owner.
- Monitor progress and ensure all actions are tracked and deadlines observed.

Managers / Senior Officers/Officers

- Investigate complex or serious complaints when escalated.
- Ensure fair handling, adherence to policy timelines, and appropriate resolution.

Senior Leadership Team

- Review and respond to escalated complaints (Stage 2).
- Make final decisions on unresolved complaints at Stage 1.
- Ensure decisions are communicated within 28 working days.

Chief Executive Officer

- In the absence of an available member of the Senior Leadership Team to undertake the Stage 2 review of a complaint, responsibility will default to the Chief Executive Officer.

4. Definitions

A complaint is defined as ‘any oral or written expression of dissatisfaction by any person made about the service, actions or inactions of Oaklee or its Officers which requires a response, and which cannot be resolved at the first point of service, or which raises matters of a serious or complex nature.

5. Associated documents and References

Type	Name	Document No / Link
Policy	E.g. Complaint Procedure	
Regulations etc.	GDPR	

6. Process

6.1 How a complaint can be made

Complaints can be made:

- in person;
- in writing;
- by phone;
- email;
- through our website; and
- through a third party where consent has been given by the resident to contact Oaklee on their behalf.

Oaklee will not accept any complaints made through a social media channel

6.2 Acknowledgement of Complaint

Oaklee will aim to acknowledge all complaints received as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days after the complaint is received.

6.3 Local Resolution

Staff who are notified of concerns at a point of service should endeavour to resolve the matter at first instance, liaising with other personnel where appropriate in order to bring the matter to a close.

6.4 Official Complaint

Oaklee will fully investigate all complaints made about our service and aim to find a solution as quickly as possible. Where we cannot resolve the issue at local level, the complaint will be dealt with through our two stage complaints procedure. The official complaint must be submitted in writing.

6.4.1 Stage 1 – Formal Recording of Complaint within Oaklee’s Complaints Management Process

The matter will be formally recorded and processed within Oaklee's Complaints Management Process in the following circumstances:

1. If staff assisting with the matter at first instance cannot achieve a resolution; or
2. If the seriousness and/ or complexity of the matter is such that escalation to Senior Leadership Team and/ or the Chief Executive Officer is required; or
3. The matter is communicated to us as a formal complaint either from the complainant or from a representative third party.

A written acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days from when the complaint is received. The acknowledgment will inform the complainant of the timelines within the complaints management process, and when they can expect a response. Please refer to the acknowledgment template in Appendix 1.

All efforts will be made to formally resolve the matter as soon as possible and no later than 30 working days.

If the matter cannot be resolved within the published timescale, the complainant will be advised of this, provided with an explanation and given a new estimated resolution time.

Where the complaint raises matters of a particularly complex or serious nature, the Chief Executive Officer will be informed and the Chief Executive Officer will nominate a member of the Senior Leadership Team to investigate and respond to the complaint.

6.4.2 Stage 2 - Senior Leadership Team

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, they must contact Oaklee within 28 days from the date of the response to the Stage 1 complaint. The complainant should inform Oaklee of the reason why they are dissatisfied with the proposed resolution and how they would like Oaklee to resolve it. If this proposal is reasonable and does not simply raise again matters which have already been dealt with, the complaint will be escalated to the Stage 2. The Compliance Team will escalate the complaint to the appropriate Senior Leadership Team member who will review the complaint, and may nominate a manager or senior officer to investigate if required make a decision and reply to the complainant within 28 working days.

In the absence of an available member of the Senior Leadership Team to undertake the Stage 2 review of a complaint, responsibility will default to the Chief Executive Officer.

6.5 Residential Tenancies Board

If a resident is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 of a complaint, the resident has the right to make an application for dispute resolution via the Residential Tenancies Board. There are two options as to how the Residential Tenancies Board will deal with a complaint: either Mediation or Adjudication.

6.5.1 Mediation

The objective of mediation is to give both parties a shared understanding of the problem so they can work towards reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution of the matter. If the mediation is not successful, one or both parties can apply to have the dispute dealt with by a Tenancy Tribunal.

6.5.2 Adjudication

At adjudication, both parties present their evidence to an Independent Adjudicator who makes a determination on the issues in dispute where no agreement can be reached. The Adjudicator's decision is binding unless there is an appeal to a Tenancy Tribunal.

7. Group, Third Party and Anonymous Complaints

Where a group of residents make a complaint, Oaklee will request a "Lead complainant" to be nominated with whom Oaklee can liaise.

Any person who makes a complaint on behalf of another resident will be asked to provide the name and address of that resident and their desired resolution. All correspondence will be copied to that resident.

If a residentt contacts Oaklee to complain but wishes to remain anonymous we will respect this decision and investigate the complaint in the normal manner. We will close the complaint once we have investigated and taken any necessary actions.

8. Persistent or Unreasonable Complainants

Oaklee will regularly monitor and review the Complaints Policy to ensure that it continues to meet the organisation's corporate objectives and is fair and equitable. Oaklee will reserve the right to deal with some complaints in a different manner, for example; if it is being pursued in an unreasonable manner, or if matters are raised again which have already been resolved. Oaklee will consider the actions of persistent complainants to be unacceptable when they take up what Oaklee would regard as being a disproportionate amount of time and resources.

9. Unacceptable actions or behaviour by complainants

Oaklee acknowledges that individuals may act out of character in times of difficulty or distress. Indeed, a complainant may have encountered upsetting or distressing circumstances prior to bringing a complaint to Oaklee's attention. Oaklee does not therefore view actions or behaviour as unacceptable simply because a complainant is assertive or determined.

However, the actions or behaviour of complainants who are angry, demanding or persistent may result in unacceptable behaviour towards Oaklee staff. In certain

circumstances where a complainant's actions are unacceptable, violent or abusive Oaklee will reserve the right to respond accordingly. Action may include restricting communication channels or involving relevant authorities.

10. Complaints received when Court Action is Pending

A complainant cannot make a formal complaint to Oaklee if it is in relation to any pending court action initiated by either Oaklee or the complainant. Oaklee will not make any comments on any matter while it is the subject of litigation.

11. How complaints will be Managed

In its approach to complaint management, Oaklee will at all times seek to ensure that:

- complaints are responded to in an open and efficient manner
- a non-adversarial approach is adopted
- all formal complaints are recorded and monitored via a Complaint tracker with Compliance team.
- complainants are kept informed about the progress of the matter
- the complaints process is continuously monitored and mistakes are used to inform improvements and enhance the customer experience
- mistakes are investigated and rectified without undue delay, and apologies issued where they are due.

12. General Information

Resident Disputes/Anti-Social Behaviour – Matters relating to fellow residents/neighbours will be dealt with by the Housing Management Team. If a resident is not satisfied with the outcome from the Housing Management team they can ask for their complaint to be investigated under the Formal Complaints Policy stated above.

Independent Advice – in order to ensure impartiality, Oaklee reserves the right to engage the services of Residential Tenancies Board / external advisers to comment on how Oaklee conducted our investigation. Oaklee can also seek support from external advisers to resolve any open complaints.

Routine Requests – Oaklee has a dedicated Customer Service Centre for customers to report repairs or make general housing enquiries.

Confidentiality and Data Protection- All complaint information will be handled sensitively and in accordance with GDPR. Records will be kept confidential and only shared with those directly involved in the investigation.



Brunel Building,
Houston South
Quarter,
Saint John's Road
West,
Dublin 8, D08 XD1F

Oaklee