

 <p style="text-align: center;">CORPORATE SECTION</p>		DOCUMENT NO COR – 04		
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1.0 Scope

In its work as a housing developer and social landlord, the Association recognises that situations may arise where tenants, clients or members of the public may wish to complain or raise a concern about the conduct of staff, the Board or decisions of the Association.

2.0 Objective

This complaints policy outlines the avenues open to customers wishing to complain. It aims to provide a means of redress to complainants wherever possible, provide a system that can deal with complaints as quickly and efficiently as possible and improve service delivery through actively addressing the concerns that others may have.

3.0 Definitions & Abbreviations

Board Board of Management
CE Chief Executive

4.0 Responsibilities

Board	Second stage appeal Receive complaints against CE
Executive Committee	Deal with emergency matters between board meetings
Honorary Secretary	Receive external complaints regarding board members
Chief Executive	First stage appeal
Business Improvement Manager	Receive initial complaint

5.0 Related Documents

Governance and Accountability Policy COR – 01
Workplace Policy HR – 03
Anti-Social Behaviour Policy HM – 02

6.0 Policy Statement

6.1 Making a Complaint

Stage one

If you have a complaint you are welcome to contact us by telephone or by calling into the office and we will try to resolve the matter immediately, in the first instance complaints should be addressed to the Business Improvement Manager. You do not have to put matters in writing, we can do this on your behalf and you will receive a copy to ensure accuracy. All complaints will be recorded in a register and acknowledged within 5 working days. This also includes complaints received by email.

All complaints will be investigated thoroughly and the complainant will receive a full written response within 10 working days.

Stage Two

If the matter is not resolved and you have cause to make a further complaint, it shall be referred to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive shall liaise with the relevant staff to obtain all of the information. The Chief Executive will make a written response within 10 working days. In the event that this written response does not resolve the issue, an interview may be arranged.

Stage Three

If the complainant still remains dissatisfied, the last internal stage allows for an appeal to the Board of Connswater Homes Ltd.

Tenants should not report complaints directly to Board members outside the office as members cannot bring matters to the attention of the Board without the Business Improvement Manager and Chief Executive first having had the opportunity to resolve complaints. Tenants approaching Board members will be directed to stage one of the procedures.

The complainant should advise the Chief Executive of his/her wish to move to this stage and the complainant will be advised of the next date on which the Board will meet. As Board meetings are bi-monthly, the Executive Committee at the discretion of the Chairman may deal with emergency matters.

The Chief Executive will provide a written report to the Board, to include all correspondence to and from the complainant

A complainant may meet with the Board by giving notice that he/she wishes to do so. Such a meeting will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

The chairman shall give a written reply to the complaint within 5 working days of the meeting.

Stage 4

If the complainant is unhappy with the decision made by the Board, he/she may take their complaint to the Commissioner for Complaints for Northern Ireland (The Ombudsman). His offices can be contacted for advice on Freephone 0800 343424 or by writing to:

**The Ombudsman
Freeport BEL 1478
Belfast BT1 6BR
Tel 0800 343424**

It should be noted that the Ombudsman normally expects that a tenant will have used the Association's internal complaints procedure before bringing a complaint to him.

6.2 Complaints against Staff and Board Members

If a complaint is being made against the Business Improvement Manager, the complainant may bypass stage one and contact the Chief Executive in the first instance.

If the complaint is against the Chief Executive, you can allow the Chief Executive to try to resolve the matter or if preferred the complainant may write directly to the Board via the Honorary Secretary at the Association's office, letters should be marked confidential.

Complaints against a Board member will only be considered where the Board member was acting on behalf of the Association, where it is alleged that they have abused their position within the Association or in some way brought the Association into disrepute.

Complaints against a Board member should be made in the first instance to the Honorary Secretary. Thereafter the matter shall be addressed by the full Board as in stage three.

The Association operates a Code of Conduct for both staff and Board members which are included in the Governance & Accountability Policy COR – 01 and the Workplace Policy HR – 03.

6.3 Neighbour Nuisance, Threatening Behaviour & Harassment

Tenants have the right to live peacefully in their home, a separate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy has been developed to tackle issues of this nature. Refer to policy HM – 02.

This policy does not prevent anyone from exercising their rights under current legislation or via statutory agencies

Complaint received by Chief Executive	
Response and date complainant advised (<i>copy attached</i>)	
Follow up Interview with Chief Executive and notes attached?	Yes / No
Case put to Chairman / Board of Management	
Complainant advised of outcome within 5 working days Copy attached	
Further action / additional notes	