

Fact sheet

July 2011

Applicant of community housing – complaints and appeals

The information in this fact sheet is applicable if you have applied to a community housing provider for housing and you have a complaint concerning your application or would like to appeal a decision made by your community housing provider in relation to your application.

As community housing providers are independent organisations, the internal complaints and appeals procedures will differ from organisation to organisation. Because of this, the steps outlined in this fact sheet are broad. Once a complaint is received by an organisation, the staff in that organisation will ensure the matter is dealt with through the organisation's complaints and appeals management system.

What is the difference between a complaint and an appeal?

A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction made where the complainant is unhappy with the standard or type of service and requests a changed outcome. For example, you may have applied for housing and have a concern with the wait time.

An appeal is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction with a decision made to provide or not provide a service. For example, you may have submitted an application for housing and been declined and you disagree with the decision.

Do I need to do anything before making a complaint or an appeal

Before putting your complaint or appeal in writing, telephone your community housing provider and ask

to speak with your housing worker to attempt to clear up your complaint or issue. Your housing worker will work with you to try and resolve your concerns.

If you require interpreter assistance, make this known to your community housing provider so that they can make arrangements for you.

What if I cannot do this or have done so and remain dissatisfied?

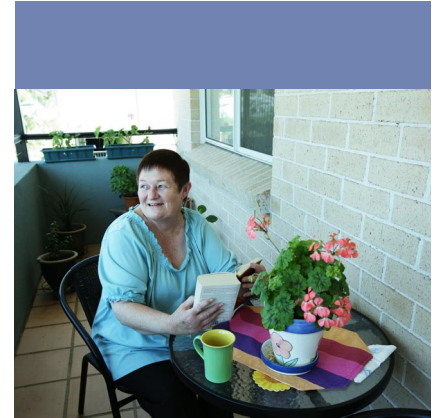
To make a complaint, you can write to your community housing provider (check with your provider on who to address your correspondence to) outlining your concerns and request an investigation. Your letter should include:

- Your name, address and telephone number
- Any reference number you may have from the organisation
- A description of what has occurred
- A request for an investigation
- Any supporting documentation that will help the community housing provider understand your complaint
- Your signature and the date

If your application for housing assistance has been declined, you can request an appeal. You should also indicate that you want a review of the decision. Your community housing provider may have a form which can be used to lodge an appeal.

How will my complaint or appeal be investigated?

All registered community housing providers are required to make information about internal complaints and appeals processes accessible to



community housing clients. You can ask your community housing provider for a copy of the organisation's internal complaints and appeals processes. If you are not satisfied with what has been provided, advise the community housing provider.

What will be the result of my complaint or appeal?

This will depend upon the issue/s you have raised in your correspondence. If you are not satisfied with the result, you will be provided with information to help you take the matter further, if you wish to do so.

If you are unhappy with an appeal outcome, you can choose to lodge a second appeal through the Housing Appeals Committee. A second level appeal is an independent review of the original decision and this is conducted by the Housing Appeals Committee. The Committee assesses whether the original decision was made fairly, in accordance with policy and whether all information was taken into account. Your community housing provider will provide you with more information on the Committee however you can also find more information at www.hac.nsw.gov.au.

What if I need help to make my complaint or appeal?

The Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (TAAS) provides free, independent information, advice and advocacy to tenants (including community housing tenants) throughout New South Wales. TAAS can assist tenants in navigating the resolution pathways in relation to tenancy issues and complaints. For the closest TAAS to you, go to



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www.tenants.org.au. If you cannot access the internet, your community housing provider can assist you in finding your closest TAAS.

What if I want someone to complain or appeal on my behalf?

Your representative or advocate will need to have written permission from you. This documentation will need to be provided to the community housing provider or any other organisation involved in your complaint or appeal.

Further information

[Community Housing Division Complaints Management Framework](#)

[Fact Sheet - Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[Complaints, Issues and Appeals Management Referral Map](#)

[Fact Sheet – Community Housing Related Complaints – General](#)

[Fact Sheet – Tenant of Community Housing – Complaints and Appeals](#)

It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to an officer of Housing NSW in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Business Assurance on 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746). Housing NSW may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.