

Complaints Policy



Title: Complaints Policy
Originator: Head of Customer Voice
Approval body and date approved: Executive Director of Customers & Communities, October 2023. Updated policy approved by MCCC, March 2026.
Date for review: September 2026

1. Introduction

At Magenta Living, we are committed to delivering excellent services that meet the evolving needs of our customers. We believe in the importance of listening to our customers and understanding their experiences to drive and influence continuous improvement.

This policy outlines how we will receive, record, and respond to complaints from customers in a manner that is clear, timely, fair, and accessible.

2. Statement of Intent

This policy sets out Magenta Living's approach to the handling of complaints received from our customers. This approach is intended to ensure that Magenta Living adhere to the following principles:

- Empower colleagues to resolve complaints at the first point of contact, wherever possible
- Provide full and fair resolutions to complaints within the published timescales
- Encourage honest feedback, both positive and negative through a publicised and accessible two-stage procedure.
- Ensure that we learn from customer feedback and use our findings to inform future service delivery and drive continuous improvement
- Promote and monitor performance against agreed service standards
- Consider recompense in circumstances where loss, distress or inconvenience can be proven, in line with Magenta Living's Compensation Policy.
- Meet the requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards and Tenant Satisfaction Measures.
- Advise customers of how they can access the relevant Ombudsman services.
- Comply with the latest version of The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (originally published February 2024, revised publication April 2024).

3. Policy

3.1. Complaint Definition

A complaint is an ***“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 an individual resident or group of residents”***

It is not necessary for the customer to use the word ‘*complaint*’ for it be treated as such, and colleagues are expected to offer access to the complaint process whenever a customer expresses dissatisfaction. Where a customer expresses dissatisfaction with the handling, or our response to their service request, a complaint will be raised.

Magenta Living will recognise the difference between an initial service request and a complaint. An initial request for service, such as the first report of a repair or an enquiry about a service will not be recorded as a complaint or handled in line with this policy. Such requests will be recorded and monitored through the most appropriate channel and will be regularly reviewed.

3.2. Exclusions

There may be other occasions when a complaint will not be dealt with in line with this policy including:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago
- Initial reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) or nuisance which are managed within the ASB Policy. If a customer is dissatisfied with the case handling, they should request an ASB case review prior to a complaint being raised. A complaint will then be opened if a customer has exhausted the case review process and remains dissatisfied with case handling.
- Allocation of properties which are handled through the Allocations’ Review process
- Nominations for properties which falls within the responsibilities of the Statutory Housing Authority
- Service charge disputes, which are handled through the Home Ownership team
- Legal cases and insurance claims. If court proceedings have commenced, we may need to suspend or cease its internal investigation processes (this involves filing details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, at court)
- Issues that fall outside the remit of Magenta Living as a landlord and outside of its area of control.
- Feedback received through surveys

Unless there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances or where the matter relates to health and safety, the organisation will not investigate complaints that have already been dealt with under this policy or are over twelve months old.

Should Magenta Living decline to handle a complaint under this policy, this will be clearly communicated to the customer in writing, including details of how to challenge the decision via the Housing Ombudsman.

3.3. Customer Definition

For the purposes of this policy Magenta Living defines a customer as:

- Tenants and leaseholders
- Members of the public
- Third parties who have permission to represent the interests of an individual

3.4. Managing Complaints

Customers may raise a complaint through a range of formats including email, phone, letter, face to face, website or social media. We will publish information on our complaints policy and how customers can access our service on our website and in other communications such as our customer welcome pack. Alongside this, we will provide information on how customers can access the Housing Ombudsman service at any point to gain support with their complaint.

Customers will be allocated a named Complaint Resolution Officer (CRO) to handle their complaint and will act as a single, independent point of contact through to the resolution of their complaint. Our CROs act independently to resolve complaints, dealing with each case on its own merit to conduct a thorough investigation, and giving customers a fair and impartial investigation into their complaint.

We aim to address and resolve customer complaints promptly and will keep customers informed about the progress. Complaints and service requests will be handled simultaneously, and we will continue to address service requests while investigating customer complaints.

Complaints (at both Stage 1 and Stage 2) will be closed once the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Any outstanding actions are monitored through our Complaints Aftercare tracker. If a complaint is added to the Aftercare tracker, customers will be regularly updated of progress of the outstanding actions through to resolution for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 responses.

We operate a two stage complaints process.

Stage 1

- All complaints will be logged on our complaints management system and acknowledged within 5 working days of being received
- Our Complaint Resolution Officers will:
 - discuss the details of the complaint so there is a clear understanding.
 - identify what outcomes they are seeking.
 - advise them of the timescale for resolving the complaint.
 - agree the preferred method and frequency of communication
 - agree when any further feedback will be provided to the customer
- Our acknowledgement letter will include:
 - the complaint stage
 - the complaint definition

- our understanding of the complaint and the outcome the customer is seeking
 - what aspects of the complaint Magenta Living are responsible for (and not)
- A written response will be provided within 10 working days from the date that the complaint was acknowledged. The date may be extended by up to 10 further working days in agreement with the customer, for example if the complaint is particularly complex in nature.
- Where cases require extensions, we will contact the customer to let them know, advise them of the rationale for extending, and confirm an expected timescale for response. Customers will also be provided with details on how to contact the Housing Ombudsman for support.
- Our Stage 1 response letter will include:
 - the complaint stage
 - the complaint definition
 - our understanding of the complaint and the outcome the customer is seeking
 - the outcome of the complaint.
 - the reason for any decisions made against all points raised as part of the complaint
 - the details of any remedy offered to put things right
 - details of any outstanding actions
 - details of changes made, or actions taken to prevent a reoccurrence
 - details of how to escalate the matter if dissatisfied, including contacting the Housing Ombudsman (as outlined in section 3.5)

Any additional issues that arise during the complaint investigation will be added to the stage 1 investigation and response. Where a stage 1 responses has been issued, any new issues will be logged as a new complaint at Stage 1. A new complaint will also be logged if the issues are unrelated to the original complaint or it would unreasonably delay the response.

Where a complaint has not been resolved to the customer's reasonable satisfaction, the customer may request that it is escalated to stage 2. This request, often referred to as an "appeal" must be submitted within six months of the date of the stage 1 resolution letter. Customers are not required to explain their reasons for escalation; however, our team will make every effort to understand the reasons for escalation to aid a swift and successful resolution.

Stage 2

- Any request to escalate a complaint to the second stage of the process will be logged and acknowledged within five working days of receipt.
- Complaints will be assigned to an independent CRO, not involved in the previous investigation
- Our acknowledgement letter will include:
 - The complaint stage
 - the complaint definition
 - our understanding of the complaint and the outcome the customer is seeking

- what aspects of the complaint Magenta Living are responsible for (and not)
- A response will then be provided within 20 working days from the date the appeal was acknowledged. The date may be extended by up to 20 further working days if the complaint is particularly complex in nature.
- Where cases require extensions, we will contact the customer to let them know, advise them of the rationale for extending, and confirm an expected timescale for response. Customers will also be provided with details on how to contact the Housing Ombudsman for support.
- Our Stage 2 response letter will include:
 - the complaint stage
 - the complaint definition
 - our understanding of the complaint and the outcome the customer is seeking
 - the outcome of the complaint.
 - the reason for any decisions made against all points raised as part of the complaint
 - the details of any remedy offered to put things right
 - details of any outstanding actions
 - details of changes made, or actions taken to prevent a reoccurrence
 - details of how to escalate the matter if dissatisfied, including contacting the Housing Ombudsman (as outlined in section 3.5)

If for any reason a complaint cannot be resolved within the timescales set out in this policy, we will work with our customers to agree a communication frequency to ensure they receive regular updates on the progress of resolution in line with their expectations.

If any new issues are raised during the Stage 2 investigation, these will be logged as a new complaint if the unrelated or it would unreasonably delay the response.

3.5. Reasonable Adjustments

In line with our Reasonable Adjustments Policy, we will take steps to support customers in accessing our service and tailor our service according to their needs. This may include providing information in alternative formats, such as large font, braille or in the customer language of choice, or any other reasonable adjustments that customer may need from Magenta.

3.6. Duty to Cooperate with the Housing Ombudsman

Throughout the complaints process, customers will be reminded of their right to approach the Housing Ombudsman for advice and support and provided with the relevant contact details to do so.

If a customer has exhausted Magenta Living's internal procedure and remains unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, details will be provided about how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman. These details can also be found in Magenta Living's Complaints leaflet, on our website or they can be provided upon request.

Magenta Living will cooperate with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman and provide relevant evidence and documentation as and when asked to do so. Failure to respond to the Housing Ombudsman may result in Magenta Living being issued with a Complaint Handling Failure Order and possible notification to the Regulator for Social Housing.

3.7. Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints will be recorded and considered as feedback and may influence change. Due to the anonymity however, the provisions of this policy will not apply

3.8. Petitions

Petitions will be treated as complaints if they meet the threshold of a complaint as outlined in the definition in 3.1. Responses will be provided to the representative lead / submitting petitioner. Petitions about political issues, matters beyond the control of the organisation or about planning applications will not be considered within this policy.

3.9. Unreasonable Customer Behaviour

In exceptional circumstances, the nature or frequency of contact from a customer or group of customers can hinder the organisation's ability to continue delivering our usual standard of service. In these cases, the organisation will provide a robust, focussed management approach that will be clearly communicated to relevant individuals. Full details of our approach in such instances can be found in the 'Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy.'

4. Implementation

The policy will be effective from xx. For example, staff will be made aware of the policy at specific training and will be available on Insite. The policy will be uploaded to the Magenta Living website. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following associated policies:

- Compensation Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy

5. Consultation

The views of Magenta Living's Senior Leadership and Governance Teams, Magenta Communities Committee and our customers have been considered and incorporated within the continuous development of this policy.

6. Equality Analysis (EA)

We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion, belief or

non-belief, sex, or sexuality or by association with someone with any of these characteristics or perception of having any of these characteristics.
The EA for this policy was undertaken on 15 September 2023 and was rated as green. (See the full EA document for further details)

7. Monitoring Performance

The Director responsible for the Complaints service will take overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the code. The Member Responsible for Complaints will provide further scrutiny from the perspective of our governing body (Board).

Key performance metrics including potential learning, as highlighted by both individual complaints and via wider analysis of themes and trends, will be regularly presented to Board, Senior Managers and any key stakeholders. Confirmed changes to service delivery will also be published through Magenta Living's website and annual reports to provide assurance that Magenta Living remain accountable to our customers.

The Head of Customer Voice will take responsibility for monitoring performance of their team and for ensuring service areas meet their required internal protocols to support the requirements of the code.

The effectiveness of this policy will be measured and monitored Performance Indicators (PI's) in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code ('the code').

- Stage 1 Complaints Acknowledged within target (5 working days)
- Stage 1 Complaints Resolved within target (10 or 20 working days)
- Stage 2 Complaints Acknowledged within target (5 working days)
- Stage 2 Complaints Resolved within target (20 or 40 working days)

A self-assessment against the code will be completed and published on Magenta Living's website annually.

8. Scheme of Delegation

The responsible authority for approving this policy is Executive Director of Customer and Communities and it was approved on 1st October 2023.

The Responsible Director for formulating this policy and ensuring its effective implementation is Customer Director.

The Responsible officer for reviewing and monitoring the implementation and performance against this policy is Head of Customer Voice.

9. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if deemed necessary though the performance monitoring process or any significant change to the regulatory

requirements. We will also monitor compliance annually through the Annual Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Amendment Log

Date of revision:	Record of amendments:	Reason for revision:
<i>October 2023</i>	<i>Policy rewrite</i>	<i>Recommendations from HQN Complaint Handling Review, Housing Ombudsman Guidance and Customer Feedback.</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>Definition updated to match that within the complaint handling code.</i>	<i>Requirement identified as part of the latest publication of the complaint handling code.</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>Further update to wording in section 3.1</i>	<i>Requirement identified as part of the latest publication of the complaint handling code.</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>Updated wording regarding 'service requests' in section 3.8</i>	<i>Requirement identified as part of the latest publication of the complaint handling code.</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>Various amendments to section 3.4</i>	<i>Requirement identified as part of the latest publication of the complaint handling code.</i>
<i>May 2024</i>	<i>Addition to section 7 describing the function of the MRC.</i>	<i>Requirement identified as part of the latest publication of the complaint handling code.</i>
<i>April 2025</i>	<i>Updated section 3.8</i> <i>Updated section 3.4</i> <i>Updated section 7</i> <i>Updated Section 8</i>	<i>Requirement identified as part of our annual self-assessment</i> <i>Reworded section to provided additional clarity on our process for each complaint stage</i> <i>Updated section 7 to include further detail on how Magenta monitors performance of complaint handling</i> <i>Include Customer Director in scheme of delegations</i>

August 2025	<i>Updated section 3.1</i> <i>Updated section 3.2</i> <i>Updated section 3.4</i>	<i>Updated following HOS review</i>
February 2026	<i>Updates section 3.4</i>	<i>Updated following Housing Ombudsman Review</i>