

Customer Feedback Policy

Overview:	This policy sets out our approach on how we will deal with the different types of feedback we receive from our customers.
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1. Introduction/ policy statement

A hallmark of The Regenda Group brand is First class customer service, as set out in our Group Corporate Plan, and having a clear and accessible Customer Feedback Policy is a fundamental tool within our Customer Focus Strategy.

The Group is committed to developing an organisational culture of customer focus where everyone is responsible for delivering our service and when something goes wrong, the way we respond will reflect our values. It matters to us what our customers think - we want to know where a service may have fallen short of expectations so that we can put things right, or where we have provided a fantastic service so that we can learn and further improve.

We are committed to fairness and equality for all and aim to have a flexible, open and transparent approach to customer feedback. Complaints, compliments and comments are welcomed and seen as a way of gaining valuable insight into the services we offer. We will listen to our customers, treat them with respect and work hard to get the right outcome for them and the organisation.

This policy sets out how The Regenda Group deals with customer feedback and is supported by a set of procedures, which explain the processes for complaint handling and recording compliments and comments.

This policy supports the Service and Product Excellence Pillar of the Group Corporate Plan and is integral to the successful delivery of all other strategic objectives around our brand, our people, growth and efficiencies and value for money.

2. Scope and exemptions

The Regenda Group is made up of Regenda Homes and its' wholly-owned subsidiaries; Redwing Living (private rented properties, leasehold and apartment block management and shared ownership and sales), M&Y Maintenance and Construction, McDonald Property Rentals (which is a subsidiary of Redwing Living), Petrus Community and TLF Training.

This over-arching policy will apply to all members of The Regenda Group. However, Group members will have documented processes to reflect the needs of a diverse customer base and comply with individual operating practices and regulatory requirements.

3. Definitions

3.1. Compliments and Comments

We define a compliment as 'any feedback which tells us that we have provided a service well, or how helpful a member of staff (or another person acting on our behalf) has been'. When we receive a compliment, we will acknowledge it, record it and forward it to the relevant person/team and their manager. If we can learn from this, we will advise the person making the compliment of any action taken.

We define a comment as 'an idea, suggestion or opinion on how we can improve our services'. When we receive a comment, we will record this and pass it on to the relevant manager to see whether this suggestion can be implemented. We will advise the person making the comment if any action is taken.

3.2 Complaints

We define a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by The Regenda Group, or our staff, which affects an individual customer or group of customers'.

Such expressions of dissatisfaction may relate to:-

- The standard or failure of a service.
- Action or lack of action in response to a request for service.
- Failure to follow an approved policy or procedure.
- Perceived poor attitude or performance of The Regenda Group staff, or people working on behalf of the Group.

3.3 What is not a complaint?

There are some things that are not classed as complaints under the scope of this policy:-

- A first-time request for service or advice, or making initial contact to report a fault or defect e.g.: informing the Group about a repair that needs doing (for the first time), or requesting a rent account statement.
- An initial request for an explanation of a decision made e.g.: about an allocation of housing.
- A report about a neighbour dispute, a report of Anti-Social Behaviour, or harassment, all of which are covered by a separate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- A query about organisational policy.
- Where the matter being complained about is or has been the subject of legal proceedings. This policy does not deal with contractual disputes.
- A complaint about services provided or decisions taken by another organisation, over which The Regenda Group has no control.
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint, or to have a complaint reconsidered which has already been through our complaints process and where a final decision has been reached.

- We will listen to and take seriously any complaints made about members of staff, which may include attitude, behaviour, misconduct, discrimination or criminal activity. Such complaints will be investigated under separate management policies and procedures. In some cases, we may not be able to provide detailed feedback about action taken against a member of staff. However we will attempt to provide as much information as possible.
- We will not normally investigate complaints over three months old, unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example: if the customer has been ill or hospitalised, or requires additional support or advocacy services to help them make a complaint). We will always consider each case on an individual basis.

3.4 Who can make a complaint, compliment or comment?

Anyone who receives or requests a service from the Group or is affected by a decision or action taken by the Group, or is an advocate of such a person. These may include:-

- Tenants and members of their households.
- Leaseholders and shared owners.
- Housing applicants.
- Service Users.
- Representatives of complainants such as friends, relatives, Board or Customer Panel members, with their written permission.
- Designated carers and advocates.
- MP's and elected officials.
- Former tenants.
- Student/Learner.
- Stakeholder

The Regenda Group recognises the benefits of working with external agencies, which can provide a complainant with greater support tailored to their individual needs.

The Group will offer assistance to those customers who do not feel able, for whatever reason, to make a complaint themselves and will provide extra support where necessary, for example – personal appointments, translation of documents into accessible formats.

3.5 How a complaint, compliment or comment can be made

We are happy to receive customer feedback in a variety of ways and formats to ensure fair access to all customers, including:-

- By phone
- In writing
- By e-mail

- In person
- Via The Regenda Group’s website / Customer Portal
- Via Social Media (Facebook, Twitter etc.)

3.6 Anonymous Complaints

It is good practice to investigate all complaints even if the source of the complaint is unknown. Therefore anonymous complaints will be recorded, along with details of any actions taken. This is in case the complainant comes forward at a later date, or a similar complaint is made by another customer.

3.7 Designated Persons

Under the Localism Act 2011, councillors and MP’s now have an enhanced role in complaint management as ‘Designated Persons’. Complainants can approach MP’s and councillors whenever they wish to. The role of the designated person is to assist in resolving complaints and issues locally.

We recognise that the Local Authority, its elected members and MP’s are valuable partners who represent the concerns and needs of individuals and communities and we will continue to support good, effective local working arrangements with them.

3.8 Housing Ombudsman, Property Ombudsman and Financial Ombudsman

Customers can decide not to take their complaint to a Designated Person and instead go straight to the Ombudsman Service. The Housing Ombudsman Service and the Property Ombudsman offer free, impartial and independent advice for the resolution of unresolved disputes between landlords and tenants and property agents and consumers. Financial complaints (such as money or debt advice) can also be made to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Where a customer is unhappy with how their complaint has been handled, they can contact the appropriate Ombudsman service, eight weeks after the internal complaints procedure has been exhausted.

Organisation	Contact details	Telephone Number	Website
Housing Ombudsman Service	Exchange Tower Harbour Exchange Square London E14 9GE	0300 111 3000	www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
The Property Ombudsman	Milford House 43-55 Milford Street Salisbury Wiltshire SP1 2BP	01722 333306	www.tpos.co.uk

3.8.1 Education Skills Funding Agency

A customer (learner/student) of TLF Training, including parents and guardians, can take their complaint direct to the ESFA for investigation by contacting them directly:

Organisation	ESFA (Education Skills and Funding Agency)
Contact Details	Customer Services Team, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Cheylesmore House, Quinton Road, Coventry, CV1 2WT Complaints.esfa@education.gov.uk
Telephone Number	0370 000 2288 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
Website	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa/complaints-about-post-16-education-and-training-provision-funded-by-esfa#what-this-complaints-procedure-covers

3.9 Compensation

Our prime focus for dealing with complaints is to resolve and learn from them and to offer compensation as the exception, not the norm. Where we recognise things have gone wrong we may offer compensation, for example by way of a payment or reduction in charge or other token of apology. Further information is in our separate Discretionary Compensation Policy.

3.10 Unreasonable and resource intensive customer behaviour

A separate policy, 'Managing Unreasonable and Resource Intensive Customer Behaviour' is in place, relating to those relatively few customers whose actions or behaviour we consider unreasonable whilst making their complaint.

4. What will we do – Guiding Principles

The Group is committed to getting services right first time and ensuring that we accept responsibility and accountability for the times when this does not happen.

All Group members, all will adopt and embrace the following guiding principles:

- We will have a positive approach to all customer feedback and ensure it is welcomed. All expressions of dissatisfaction will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and in confidence.

- We will be responsive, approachable and helpful at all stages of the complaints procedure. No customer will suffer any disadvantage as a result of making a complaint.
- We are committed to making it easy for customers and other stakeholders to provide feedback – positive or negative – and will use this opportunity to learn about our strengths and understand our weaknesses and improve.
- We will be flexible in our approach and help our customers through the complaints process in a way that works best for them.
- We will take ownership of a complaint, act quickly to identify the problem and put it right straight away. Our focus is always on resolving issues at the first stage wherever possible.
- We will keep the customer informed throughout the complaints process and where the issue is complex and requires further investigation or review, we will respond within agreed timescales. We recognise that quality as well as time is important.
- We will keep clear, transparent and accurate records and can account for the decisions we have made.
- We will have clear service standards and simple and accessible procedures to support this policy, so that customers know what to expect. We will involve our customers in reviewing processes to make sure they are inclusive and fit for purpose.
- We will ask customers how they think we handled their complaint and how satisfied they are with the solution.
- We will monitor all comments, compliments and complaints received and provide feedback to customers about how we will use this information to improve our services.

5. Access and communication

The Regenda Group is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone. We will seek alternative methods of access and services delivery where barriers perceived or real may exist that may make it difficult for people to work for us or use our services.

6. Equality, diversity and human rights

The Regenda Group is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation.

We also recognise that some people experience disadvantage due to their socioeconomic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance,

responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice. Regenda will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation.

7. Associated policies and legislative framework

This policy has links with all Group Policies and Processes, in particular:-

- Discretionary Compensation Policy
- Managing Unreasonable and Resource Intensive Customer Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Customer Focus Strategy
- Regenda Service Promises

When dealing with complaints, the Group will ensure it abides by the relevant regulatory, equality, diversity and inclusion and data protection legislation. We are a member of the Housing Ombudsman Service, the Property Ombudsman and ARLA PropertyMark.

Links and Best Practice:

- HCA Regulatory Framework
- Localism Act 2011
- CIH Complaints Charter
- HouseMark
- Institute of Customer Service
- Education Skills Funding Agency

8. Monitoring and reporting

We will maintain detailed records of all complaints and feedback and provide reports on performance, trends and any lessons learned to meet relevant customer and stakeholder requirements. We will publish our performance, including the number, nature and outcome of complaints on an annual basis.

Complaints and customer feedback will be used as a source of learning and any knowledge gained will be applied to improve our service. We will benchmark our performance measures with other organisations as appropriate.