



## FAIROAK HOUSING ASSOCIATION COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS POLICY

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Policy Review Date	December 2026

### **Purpose of this policy**

This policy sets out how Fairoak Housing Association responds to complaints to ensure that the values of the Association are always upheld. This policy is published on our website, together with an easy read version and form, to ensure that the process of making a complaint or issuing a compliment is clear, simple, and accessible to all.

This policy has regard to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Framework.

### **Policy Statement**

At Fairoak Housing Association, we aim to provide all our tenants with the very best service possible. However, we acknowledge that sometimes things do go wrong, and it is important that our tenants have an easy and accessible process to follow so that we can put things right. We recognise that complaints can be a useful source of feedback and the process of investigating and acting on them enables us to learn from our mistakes and continue to improve the service that we provide.

To ensure transparency we will publish information on our website and in our Annual Report to inform tenants and other stakeholders on the number, nature, and outcomes of complaints and how we have used complaints to improve our services.

### **Definition of a complaint**

We use the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint; 'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Fairoak Housing Association, our staff, or those acting on our behalf, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.'

### **Exclusions**

On rare occasions, we may be unable to accept a complaint. Examples of this are:

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over 6 months ago unless the complaint is a reoccurring issue.
- Where legal proceedings have started or are pending.
- The complaint is in relation to a support provider. We would encourage and, if necessary, assist the tenant to make the complaint in accordance with the support provider's complaints policy



- The complaint has already been considered under the complaints policy or is deemed to be unreasonably vexatious.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will provide an explanation with reasons why the matter cannot be considered under our complaints policy.

### **Procedure for making a complaint**

Wherever possible we would always prefer to deal with issues informally and encourage our tenants to first discuss any problems with a Housing & Support Officer or the Customer Engagement Officer who will endeavour to put things right. However, if a tenant, or their representative, is still not happy with how something has been handled, then their complaint will be considered within the scope of this policy.

We will always ensure that complaints are dealt with promptly, politely and fairly and are thoroughly investigated and all the evidence considered. We will provide clear information on how a decision has been reached and how it may be challenged or taken further.

Complaints can be made in any of the following ways:

- By calling Fairoak Housing Association on 01539 720082
- By visiting the Fairoak Housing Association office at 155 Highgate, Kendal Cumbria LA9 4EN
- By emailing at [enquiries@fairoakhousing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fairoakhousing.co.uk)
- By writing to Fairoak Housing Association at 155 Highgate, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4EN
- Via a representative, for example a family member, friend, advocate, or support worker

### **Fairoak has a two stage complaints process as follows:**

#### **Stage 1:**

We will:

- Try to resolve the complaint by telephoning or visiting the tenant or their representative on the day that the complaint is received to see if we can put things right.
- If further time is required to investigate a complaint, we will write to the complainant within 5 working days acknowledging the complaint and advising who will be managing the complaint.
- Aim to complete our investigations and respond in writing within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

We will also acknowledge where things have gone wrong and apologise for any mistakes, take any appropriate action, offer compensation, on an evidential basis, where appropriate and ensure that we learn from the complaint and make any changes to our policies and procedures that may be necessary.

We will also advise the tenant, or their representative, that if they are still not satisfied with how their complaint has been dealt with, they can ask to progress it to Stage 2 of our complaints process.



## **Stage 2:**

Stage 2 will be dealt with by the Chair of the Board and can be made using any of the methods listed in Stage 1. The Chair will investigate the complaint and determine why it has not been resolved and whether the outcome of Stage 1 is correct. A full written response will be provided within 20 working days of receiving a request to escalate the complaint.

## **Housing Ombudsman Review**

In accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, Fairoak will make it clear to tenants and their representatives that they have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any point during the complaints process to receive any advice or assistance that they may need.

At the end of Stage 2, Fairoak will advise in writing details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service and that this can be through a designated person, for example, MP or local councillor within 8 weeks of the final decision.

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted as follows:

Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ  
Visit: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint)  
Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
Telephone: 0300 111 3000

A list of MPs and local councillors can be found out:

[www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps)

## **Confidentiality**

All complaints will be treated in confidence ensuring that privacy is respected, and that the Association is fair and consistent in its approach.

## **Designated Complaints Officer**

The designated complaints officer for the purpose of this policy is the Customer Engagement Officer who will have responsibility for complaints handling and ensuring that the policy is complied with.

## **Mistreatment of Vulnerable Adults**

Any complaint received by the Association that falls into the category of "mistreatment of vulnerable adults" will be actioned in accordance with multi agency safeguarding procedures agreed with the relevant local authority.



## **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Fairoak will monitor and learn from complaints to improve the services we provide to our tenants in the following ways:

- Maintain a system to record and analyse complaints and their outcomes
- Measure and record satisfaction levels in complaint handling
- Report to the board at least biannually on complaints received and measures taken
- Publish information on complaints on our website and in our Newsletters and Annual Report

## **Compliments**

Fairoak Housing Association aim to provide the best possible service to our tenants and when we get it right or particularly excel, we would like to encourage tenants and their representatives to let us know.

Compliments can be made using the same range of methods available to make a complaint and an easy read form can be downloaded from our website.