



Complaints and Appeals

Our Commitment

Housing Plus' Board of Directors and Management Team is committed to handling complaints effectively and efficiently. This commitment is demonstrated through:

- + The establishment, implementation and maintenance of this program;
- + Appointment and training of senior managers to act as Complaints Managers
- + Training of all staff and representatives with respect to our complaints handling procedures;
- + Ensuring our complaints handling procedures are accessible to all customers and other external parties;
- + The establishment of our on-line complaints management system;
- + The implementation of management systems and reporting procedures to ensure timely and effective complaints handling and monitoring; and
- + Regular analysis of complaints received and the implementation of rectification action where deficiencies in our internal systems and procedures are identified

Who can make a complaint?

Any interested party may make a complaint this includes:

Complaints may be made against any Client, applicant, member of staff, contractor or volunteer. Housing Plus will investigate any complaints to ensure that its policies, procedures and standards are being complied with.

When can I complain?

If you are not satisfied with our service or one of our policies you have the right to complain. If you think we have done something unreasonable or illegal, or you feel we have treated you unfairly you may complain. Housing Plus will seek to resolve the complaint sensitively, fairly and promptly in accordance with the policies, procedures and standards of the organisation.

Complaint procedure

There are a number of steps in the complaint procedure as outlined below. Staff will support anyone wanting to make a complaint.

How to make a complaint

Step 1: Make a verbal complaint to any staff member of Housing Plus. Explain your problem and what outcome you are seeking. If you prefer you can put your complaint in writing, however this is not necessary. The staff of Housing Plus will record your complaint in the complaints management system and this will be passed onto the Complaints Manager. This may resolve your complaint but if not you may consider Step 2.

Step 2: If you are not happy with the outcome proposed by the Complaints Manager, you can escalate your complaint to the Chief Operating Officer of Housing Plus, who will review your complaint.

Step 3: If you are not happy with the outcome proposed by the Chief Operating



Looking for more info?

-  Contact your local Housing Plus office
-  Visit housingplus.com.au
-  Call us on 1800 603 300

Officer, your complaint will be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.

Registrar of Community Housing

If you are not happy with the outcome from any of the three stages, or you feel there is a conflict of interest you may refer the matter to the Registrar of Community Housing. Clients will be given information regarding the Complaints process through the Registrar of Community Housing.

The Registrar investigates complaints that raise concerns about a registered Community Housing providers compliance with the Regulatory Code under the Housing Regulation 2009 and the Housing Act 2001 (NSW). The Registrar does not investigate complaints that raise concerns about individual tenancies, Registered Community Housing providers and other complaint resolution bodies have responsibility for responding to these types of complaints. The Registrar does not have a complaint resolution role and cannot provide a remedy for individuals. Information about the Register may be found at <http://www.nrch.nsw.gov.au/>

Appeals

Clients and applicants have the right to ask Housing Plus to review decisions they disagree with or think are unfair. The sorts of decisions that can be appealed are: rental rebate assessment decline of a transfer or re-housing application not eligible for housing not selected for housing allocated inappropriate property request for property improvements declined unsatisfactory complaint process.

A Client or applicant can appeal a Housing Plus decision, if they believe that:

- + Inadequate consideration was given to their individual circumstances, or
- + The decision was made contrary to Housing Plus policy, of
- + The decision involved a poor

interpretation of policy, or

- + The procedure used to reach the decision was not fair and correct.

The appeal process starts when a client believes that a decision made by Housing Plus is not correct and they have not been able to resolve the issue through discussion with the office which made the decision.

The aim of the appeal process is to confirm whether Housing Plus has made the right decision.

There are two levels of appeal:

- + Formal Internal Appeal Process – internal review by Housing Plus, and
- + Formal External Appeal Process – independent review by the Housing Appeals Committee.

Formal Internal Appeal Process – Internal review by Housing Plus

Housing Plus' general approach to Internal Appeals is:

- + A client requests a first tier appeal by completing an Appeal Form
- + The review of the decision is conducted by the Chief Executive Officer who may delegate this responsibility to the Chief Operating Officer if this officer has not been involved in the complaint.
- + The Chief Executive Officer will determine the decision of the appeal.
- + If it appears that the outcome of the Internal Appeal will not be in the client's favour, Housing Plus will offer a phone or face to face interview before the review is completed. This gives the client an opportunity to explain the reasons they think the decision should be changed, to understand Housing Plus' decision making process and to provide any relevant, further information.

Formal External Review – Independent review by the Housing Appeals Committee

If a client believes the decision made by Housing Plus in the Internal Appeal is incorrect, they can ask the Housing Appeals Committee to review the decision. Clients will be given information about the Housing

Appeals Committee process.

The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency that can review decisions of community housing providers. The Committee is informal and there is no charge to clients for their service. Information on the Housing Appeals Committee can be found at www.hac.nsw.gov.au.

After its hearing, the Housing Appeals Committee will make a recommendation to Housing Plus that:

- + The original decision be upheld, or
- + The original decision be changed in full, or
- + The original decision be changed in part.

The final decision remains with Housing Plus. However, Housing Plus gives careful consideration to all of the recommendations made by the Housing Appeals Committee. Housing Plus will advise the client in writing of the outcome of their External Appeal.

Timeframes

All complaints and appeals will be acknowledged within 7 days. You will be kept fully informed of the progress of your complaint. It is our aim to resolve all complaints within 21 working days with the initial investigation completed within 14 days. If we are unable to respond to your complaint within 21 days the Complaints Manager will contact you to discuss.



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