



Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

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1. Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy

Nehemiah Housing is committed to providing a high-quality service to all its tenants however we recognise that there may be occasions when things go wrong and the service, we provide may not meet your expectations.

Our mission is to build successful, sustainable, and diverse communities by providing housing and well-being services in a culturally sensitive way to our current and our future tenants.

We recognise that comments, compliments, and complaints are valuable tenant feedback and a positive contribution to the development and improvement of our services. Nehemiah Housing welcomes all feedback from tenants.

2. Policy statement

Comments, compliments, and complaints will be used to continuously improve our services to tenants. We will deal with all complaints fairly and without bias.

We will use this policy to:

- Align with our strategic objective of delivering excellent tenant service with respect.
- Provide services tenants want and need.
- Identify problems and thereby improve services.
- Be part of a positive can-do culture.
- Be a learning organisation which highlights areas for improving tenant service.
- Reveal where processes are not user friendly.
- Improve tenant relations, employee morale, and company credibility.
- Prevent repeat problems.
- Record all comments, compliments, and complaints.
- Resolve complaints effectively with set targets.
- Deal with all complaints fairly.
- Promote conciliation in all cases.
- Resolve complaints at an early stage in the process, whilst giving tenants a fair opportunity to appeal against the decisions if they remain unhappy.
- Provide a clear outcome of the investigation of the complaint to the tenant.

3. Policy purpose and aims

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that staff and contractors, (working on behalf of Nehemiah), continue to be committed to listening to complaints and putting things right, treating them seriously, and learn from them as well as comments and compliments so that we can continuously improve our services. This is also to comply with the new Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

Nehemiah Housing is committed to providing a high-quality service for its tenants and working in an open and accountable way that builds trust and respect.

Accessibility and Inclusion

We will ensure that all tenants, including those with disabilities or language needs, can access the complaints process in an inclusive and accessible way. This commitment aligns with the Equality Act 2010 and reflects our dedication to treating everyone with dignity and respect.

Our approach is guided by the principles of fairness, accountability, and continuous improvement. Complaints are an opportunity to listen, learn, and make positive changes that benefit all tenants.

We know that on occasions sometimes things go wrong, and tenants may be dissatisfied and wish to complain. Comments, compliments, and complaints give us valuable tenant feedback which we use to develop and improve our services. We will listen to our tenants and address issues where our tenants are unhappy with our services.

This policy is designed to comply with our legal and regulatory responsibilities.

Nehemiah Housing has a procedure within this policy to comply with the Complaint Handling Code 2024.

This policy complies with the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, including Section 25 (Awaab's Law), which sets out strict timeframes for investigating and remedying hazards that pose a risk to health and safety, such as damp and mould. Tenants should also refer to our Damp and Mould Policy for detailed guidance on how these issues are addressed.

4. Nehemiah Responsible Members for

Complaints Complaint Officer

- We have a lead Complaint Officer (Director of Operations) who will take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaising with the Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to our governing body.

Member Responsible for Complaints

- We also have appointed an MRC (Member Responsible for Complaints), that is part of our governing body on our Board, (Operations Committee Chair). This person has lead responsibility for complaints and their role is also to support a positive complaint handling culture within our organisation.

5. Our Policy

Who can offer us feedback?

Anyone who receives or requests a service from us or is affected by a decision or action taken by us can give us feedback. This includes:

- tenants, leaseholders, shared owners, and owner occupiers.
- Former tenants/leaseholders
- Applicants for housing
- Partnership agencies
- Contractors or consultants
- Applicants for employment
- Any other person or organisation affected by our services, including those representing our tenants (e.g., legal services, advice agencies such as the CAB, MPs, or Councillors) providing necessary authority to act has been provided.

6. What is a complaint?

Definition: ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual tenant or group of tenants’ (Source: Housing Ombudsman)

We will investigate a complaint when a tenant tells us:

- We have done something they are not satisfied.
- We have not done something that we said we would.
- Staff have demonstrated poor attitude/conduct/performance.
- We have not followed our policy or procedure.

When an individual expresses dissatisfaction, Nehemiah will register the issues as a complaint and implement our complaint procedure.

7. What is a compliment?

Definition: A compliment is an expression of satisfaction with the services we provide. We want to hear from tenants when they have received excellent tenant service. Compliments can be given to us by telephone, in writing, via email, our social media sites, via our website, using our feedback leaflet or talking to us at tenant appointments.

8. Tenant Comments

We welcome constructive comments or suggestions that tenants believe would improve our service or benefit their neighbourhood. Comments can be given to us by tenant surveys, phone, in writing, via email, our social media sites, via our website, using our feedback leaflet or talking to us at tenant appointments.

9. When should the complaints process not be used?

The complaints process should not be used if a tenant:

- Requesting a new service: Is asking for a service from us for the first time (for example the reporting of a repair). A service request is a request from a tenant to Nehemiah Housing requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but will be recorded, monitored, and reviewed regularly.
- Is making an initial request for information or an explanation of a decision made.
- Wants to report incidents of anti-social behaviour or racial harassment. These issues are dealt with under other procedures.
- The complaint relates to a legal claim or personal injury claim. When proceedings have commenced and have been filed at court then these will be dealt with through the legal process and handled by our insurance and legal advisors and not through our complaints process.
- An issue which happened over 12 months ago, (a complaint should be within 12 months of the issue occurring), or the individual becoming aware of issue. Unless there are exceptional circumstances which mean the complainant was unable to notify us of their concerns sooner. We may consider any historical complaint outcomes, to resolve the issue for the complainant.#
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), such as actions that cause individuals to feel frightened, upset, or intimidated, is addressed under Nehemiah's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Examples of ASB include noise disturbances, vandalism, harassment, or threatening behaviour, which are not classified as complaints under the Complaints Policy. These matters are managed separately through the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. Reports of ASB should be directed to Nehemiah Housing, where they will be handled appropriately. The Complaints Policy is reserved for instances of dissatisfaction with the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Nehemiah Housing or its representatives. Further information regarding the management of ASB can be found in our Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- Complaints that refer to statutory or external obligations (i.e. things we must do by law: In these circumstances, where the facts are clear, the issue cannot be changed so investigating the complaint would not offer resolution. An explanation of such obligation will be provided to our tenant or stakeholder.

Complaints will not usually be considered when the case is already going through a court or tribunal (including disrepair cases). In these circumstances court procedures, timescales and judgements would take precedence. Any complaints received regarding our policies will be considered for any potential inclusion in the next review of the policy concerned. Consultants, contractors, and partnership agencies may have features and steps contained within their contracts or management agreements.

Where this is not the case, this policy and the complaints procedure should be used. If further enquiries are needed to resolve the matter, or if the complainant requests it, the issue must be logged as a complaint.

10. Service Request

A service request is a request from a tenant requiring action to be taken to put something right. A complaint arises when the tenant expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their request. If the tenant remains unhappy, they can raise a complaint, and the complaint procedure will be implemented at Stage 1. An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, though wherever possible, the person/staff member completing the survey will make tenant aware of how they can raise a complaint.

Damp and Mould: Statutory Response Process

Damp and mould reports are treated as a priority due to the health and safety risks they present. These reports will follow the process set out in **Nehemiah's Damp and Mould Policy**, which complies with **Awaab's Law** and the **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023**.

This process includes:

- **Initial assessment within prescribed timescales** to identify any hazards including damp, mould or excess condensation.
- **Taking immediate action to make safe** any hazards identified.
- **Completing remedial works within the statutory time limits** set out under Awaab's Law.
- **Keeping tenants informed** of findings, actions required and expected timescales.
- **Providing advice and support** to help reduce recurrence where appropriate.

If a tenant is dissatisfied with how a damp and mould report has been assessed, handled, or resolved, they may raise a complaint under this Complaints Policy. The complaint will follow the two-stage complaints process. For full details of how Nehemiah manages damp and mould, tenants should refer to the **Damp and Mould Policy**.

11. How can our tenants complain?

Complainants can tell us about their complaint in the most convenient way to them. We will accept complaints in any way the tenant wishes, including but not limited:

Letter
Email
Internet (includes social media platforms, e.g., google review) Face-to-Face.
Telephone
Via an advocate (e.g., a relative, support worker, tenant advocate)

A complainant does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such. A complaint submitted via a third party or representative will still be handled in line with our complaint process. Individual can raise their complaint in any way and to any member of Nehemiah staff.

If your complaint relates to damp and mould, please see our Damp and Mould Policy for details of how we will respond. If you remain dissatisfied with how your damp and mould complaint has been handled, you can escalate it through this Complaints Policy.

We aim to communicate and respond quickly and appropriately, in the style, language and format requested for further information please contact:

Nehemiah Housing, Telephone: 0121 358 0966, Email: contact@nehemiah.co.uk.
Write: 1-3 Beacon Court, Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 6NN, or
visit our website: www.nehemiah.co.uk/your-home/our-complaints-process

12. Role of the Regulator: Housing Ombudsman

Nehemiah Housing is a member of the Housing Ombudsman service and will cooperate fully with them throughout any investigation and will abide by any decisions reached by the ombudsman. As members of the Housing Ombudsman scheme Nehemiah is committed to implement and follow the new complaints handling code when dealing with complaints.

The Housing Ombudsman has updated its approach to how tenants can submit complaints. Tenants are strongly encouraged to use the Ombudsman's **online complaint form**, as this is the most efficient and reliable method to avoid delays in progressing their case. The Ombudsman will **not accept any new case queries via email**, and tenants will be redirected to the online form. In addition, tenants should **not send original documents by post**, as the Ombudsman is unable to return them. These requirements ensure that all information is received securely, processed promptly, and handled in accordance with the Ombudsman's procedures.

A tenant or their representative can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage during the complaints process if they are not happy with how their complaint is being handled.

The Housing Ombudsman contact details are:

- Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/tenants
- Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Write to the: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D,

Preston, PR2 0ET,

- www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/online-complaint-form/

13. Anonymous complaints

If a complaint is made anonymously, it should be logged and investigated via the complaints' procedure, bearing in mind it will not be possible to contact the tenant to investigate further or supply them with a response. However, there may be substance to the complaint that could result in a service improvement.

14. Complaints about contractors

Nehemiah Housing retains the responsibility for investigating complaints about contractors and responding to tenants about this type of complaint. Complaints about contractors/managing agents etc. will be investigated by a senior officer or manager. When a managing agent or contractor deals with a complaint directly from a tenant, the process will not be more than two stages in line with the Complaint Handling Code.

15. Complaints Process

Nehemiah Housing's complaints process has 2 stages. We will not normally consider complaints regarding a problem that occurred more than 12 months prior to the complaint being made. Where an individual raises additional complaint during the investigation, these will be incorporated into Stage 1 response if they are related, and the Stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the Stage 1 response has been issued, the new complaint is unrelated to the existing complaint already being investigated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues raised will be logged as a new complaint.

Stage 1 – Investigation

An officer will take responsibility for investigating the complaint and advising the tenant of the outcome. If the complaint is about a staff member, their line manager will investigate it.

Complaints relating to staff may result in Nehemiah using its disciplinary procedures.

Nehemiah is not required to obtain tenant consent to extend the timescale for responding to a Stage 1 complaint. However, we will always communicate any extension clearly. This includes explaining the reason for the delay, providing a revised expected response date, and keeping the tenant updated throughout. This approach ensures fairness, transparency, and trust in how complaints are handled. When notifying tenants of an extension, we will also provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details, so they are aware of how to escalate their complaint if they remain dissatisfied.

Stage 1 Timescales:

Nehemiah will acknowledge and log a Stage 1 complaint within 5 working days of receipt. We aim to investigate and provide a full response within 10 working days from the date of acknowledgement. If the complaint is complex or additional enquiries are required, we will inform the complainant that more time is needed, explain the reasons for the extension, and provide a revised

response date. Where possible, we aim not to exceed a further 10 working days and will keep the complainant updated throughout the process.

Stage 2 – Review

Where a tenant is unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, they can appeal to a member of the management team or Executive Team who will review the initial resolution. For example, if the complaints are in relation to a member of staff or service in our sheltered schemes the first stage will be the senior supported housing officer and then this will escalate to the Deputy Housing Services Manager at Stage 2.

Landlords are not required to obtain tenant consent to extend the timescales for responding to complaints. However, it is important that any extensions are communicated clearly. We will explain the reasons for the delay, provide a revised expected response date, and keep tenants updated throughout the process. This transparency helps maintain trust and ensures fairness in how complaints are handled. When notifying tenants of an extension, we will also provide the Housing Ombudsman's contact details, so they know how to escalate their complaint if they are unhappy with the progress.

Timescales:

Nehemiah will acknowledge and log a Stage 2 complaint within 5 working days of receiving the escalation request. We will investigate and provide a full response within 20 working days from the date of acknowledgement. For complex cases—for example, where a third party or statutory agency is involved—we will inform the complainant of the need for a revised timescale, explain the reasons for the extension, and outline the new expected resolution date. Where possible, we aim not to exceed a further 10 working days and will keep the complainant updated throughout.

Escalation Beyond Stage 2: If you remain dissatisfied after Stage 2, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman directly at any time for independent review.

Tenants can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage when they raise a complaint if they are unhappy with how the complaint is being handled or if they are unhappy about the outcome at the end of Stage 2.

Handling Multiple Complaints

Nehemiah Housing is committed to handling complaints in a fair and transparent manner. In line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, if a tenant submits multiple complaints about the same interaction or issue, these will be consolidated and treated as a single complaint. This approach ensures clarity, avoids duplication, and allows for a more efficient resolution process. If additional concerns arise during the investigation that are directly related to the original complaint, they will be incorporated into the ongoing investigation and addressed as part of the same complaint.

Persistent, Unreasonable and Behaviour

Nehemiah Housing is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially. Staff are trained to respond with professionalism, patience, and

empathy to the needs of all those making a complaint. However, staff or contractors are not expected to tolerate behaviour by complainants that is unreasonable, for example abusive, offensive, or threatening behaviour or a complainant makes a large number of unreasonable and persistent demands.

In these instances, we will reserve the right to restrict or change access to our complaints service. We will tell the person in writing why we have decided to restrict access, what the restrictions are and how long they will last.

In cases where unreasonable behaviour is identified while a member of staff is addressing a complaint raised by a tenant, restrictions will be implemented. The tenant's behaviour will be reviewed before any restrictions are lifted. Should the unreasonable behaviour persist, the restrictions may be extended together with implementing the housing management procedure.

16. Information for Tenants

All tenants will be kept informed of their complaint throughout the investigation. Each complaint raised will be considered on its own merits by the investigating officer. We will publish details of our complaints process including timescales for dealing with complaints. We will notify complainants if we are unable to meet the target response times. Where an investigation about individual colleagues and their actions is undertaken in line with our Staff Policies, we will not disclose the detailed outcome directly to the tenant due to the confidentiality rights of our staff.

17. Reasonable Adjustments

Nehemiah will ensure where possible reasonable adjustment is made for tenants where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010 when investigating, review and resolving complaints raised.

We want our complaints process to be accessible to everyone. If you have a disability, health condition, language need, or any other support requirement, we will make reasonable adjustments so you can raise and follow your complaint fairly and easily.

Reasonable adjustments will be based on your individual needs. We will talk with you to understand what support you require and agree what adjustments are appropriate. We will not make assumptions about what help you might need.

Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- providing information in large print, audio, or translated formats.
- communicating in your preferred way, such as by phone, email, letter, or home visit
- allowing a support worker, family member, advocate, councillor, or MP to act on your behalf (with your permission)
- offering more time to provide information if needed
- providing alternative ways to submit or receive information if digital access is difficult.

When necessary, we may also seek advice from specialist organisations to ensure we offer the right support and provide appropriate signposting and guidance.

18. Compensation

At any stage we can offer an apology or discretionary payment of compensation. Compensation will be offered in accordance with our Compensation Policy, (discretionary Payment reviewed June 2024).

19. General Data protection (GDPR) and Third Parties

Nehemiah has a responsibility under the Data Protection Act 2018 to hold, obtain, record, use and store all personal data relating to identifiable individual in a secure and confidential manner.

We are committed to safeguarding the rights of our tenants to confidentiality and privacy. All Nehemiah colleagues are required to maintain a duty of care towards information regarding tenants and applicants, in line with data protection legislation and Data Protection Policy 2018. The Data Protection Policies applies to all Nehemiah's employees, members, volunteers, contractors and to staff members of any other bodies with whom we work who handle data jointly.

When we receive a complaint on behalf of a tenant, we will only deal with the third party on receipt of a signed Authorization from the complainant for the organisation/ individual to act on their behalf. This will include Councillors or MPs letters.

20. Governance Oversight: Learning from Complaints and Monitoring

- All comments, compliments and complaints will be logged on to a database to maintain a record for the organisation.
- Every comment, compliment or complaint is a learning opportunity for Nehemiah Housing and should be encouraged.
- We will record any service development or tenant care issues identified during a complaint investigation. These will be recorded, and evidence gathered to support changes made or planned to improve our services and learn from complaints, comments, and compliments. We will regularly review issues and trends arising from complaint handling,
- Where we have made changes to services or improvements due to complaints, comments, or compliments, we will report these to our tenants in our tenant annual report.
- Complaints data will be reported to the Board & Operations Committee quarterly in terms of numbers, nature of complaints and when resolved at either stage 1 or stage 2.
- We will monitor any individual complaint and their outcomes where

necessary, including cases referred to the Ombudsman or referred to regulatory bodies. We will track any implementation of management responses to ensure we are delivering to agreed timescales.

- We will review the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code.
- We will publish annual complaints performance data, including lessons learned and service improvements, in our Tenant Annual Report.

21. Tenant feedback

We will aim to obtain feedback from complainants about their experience of making a complaint to Nehemiah Housing. We will use the information collated in this survey to continually evaluate and improve the complaints service and will include the survey outcomes in our performance reports to the Operations Committee and our tenants. We conduct both internal and independent surveys of our services. So, we can capture any form of dissatisfaction in all service areas.

Although an expression of dissatisfaction is not defined as a complaint, where possible, the person carrying out the survey will make our tenants aware of how they can pursue a complaint.

22. Training and Support for Staff

All Nehemiah Housing staff will be fully supported in the operation of this policy through training on the policy principals, the procedure for implementing the policy, and use of IT to record, monitor, and report on complaints. Nehemiah will have a recognised Complaints Champion who will develop a level of expertise in dealing with complaints and enable staff to reflect on issues from a tenant's point of view. The role of the Complaints Champion (Tenant Engagement Officer) will be to help staff with specific complaints if required. All staff are required to complete the Data Protection: Compliance Following GDPR training annually, which is monitored by the Audit and Risk Committee via the Data Protection Officers annual review.

23. Related Policies, Acts and Strategy

This policy should be read alongside our Damp and Mould Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, and Compensation Policy to ensure full understanding of related procedures and obligations, in addition the following policies and procedures are linked to this policy document.

Other relevant documents :

- Social Housing (Regulation Act 2023)
- **Renters' Rights Act 2025 – effective from 2026**
- Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025

24. Legislative Compliance: This policy reflects current legal requirements and will be updated as legislation changes. It incorporates the provisions of **Awaab’s Law**, which came into effect on **27 October 2025** under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. *This includes compliance with Section 25 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (Awaab’s Law), which imposes legal duties on landlords to investigate and make safe hazards such as damp and mould within strict timeframes.*

This policy will continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect future phases of Awaab’s Law and other legislative changes, including the **Renters’ Rights Act 2025**, which will extend similar protections to the private rented sector from 2026.

This policy will be updated promptly to reflect any future changes in legislation or regulatory requirements.

25. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by Nehemiah’s Operations Committee. Minor adjustments will be completed in between reviews if applicable and signed off by members of Nehemiah’s Executive Management Team with the policy presented at the next convened Operations Committee meeting. All policies are accessible on our website, and hard copies (which can also be translated) can be provided on request.

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