

BEER COMMUNITY LAND TRUST LIMITED

COMPLAINTS POLICY, COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND SERVICE REQUEST PROCESS

Version 2.0

Approved by: The Management Board

Review Date: Annually

1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

Beer Community Land Trust (Beer CLT) is committed to providing a high standard of service to its tenants and recognises the importance of listening and responding positively to feedback, service requests and complaints.

As a small Community Land Trust, Beer CLT values positive and constructive relationships with its tenants. We will always seek to resolve concerns quickly, fairly and informally wherever possible. Where this is not possible, tenants have the right to make a complaint and have their concerns considered fairly, transparently and within clear timescales.

Beer CLT is committed to:

- making it easy for tenants to raise service requests, concerns and complaints;
- resolving complaints promptly and fairly;
- learning from complaints and improving services where appropriate;
- complying with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code; and
- treating all tenants with dignity, respect and understanding throughout the complaints process.

This policy applies to all Beer CLT tenants.

Tenants are not required to complete a form in order to make a service request or complaint. Requests and complaints may be made verbally or in writing and Beer CLT will record all matters raised irrespective of how they are submitted.

Beer CLT will maintain appropriate records of all service requests and complaints received. Records may be maintained electronically and will include details of the request or complaint, actions taken, correspondence, outcomes, timescales and any learning identified.

Beer CLT will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure all tenants are able to access the complaints process. Alternative formats of this policy are available upon request.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Management Board or sooner where required following changes to legislation, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code or learning identified through complaints received.

2. SERVICE REQUESTS

A service request is a request from a tenant asking Beer CLT to take action to put something right.

Examples may include:

- repairs and maintenance issues;
- reporting faults or defects;
- tenancy related enquiries;
- requests for information or assistance.

Service requests may be made verbally or in writing and will normally be directed to the Property Manager or any Board Member.

Beer CLT will acknowledge service requests within three working days and, wherever possible, advise tenants within five working days of the proposed action to be taken.

Where urgent repairs are required, action may be taken immediately before formal acknowledgement is provided.

Where Beer CLT considers that a matter is not its responsibility under the tenancy agreement, we will explain the reasons for our decision and advise the tenant accordingly.

Where a tenant remains dissatisfied with the response to a service request, they will have the opportunity to make a complaint.

Making a complaint will not prevent or delay any actions required to address immediate issues relating to a service request.

3. WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Beer CLT or those acting on its behalf which affects a tenant or group of tenants.

A tenant does not need to use the word "complaint" for it to be treated as such.

Whenever a tenant expresses dissatisfaction with our service, Beer CLT will provide them with the opportunity to make a complaint.

Complaints may be submitted verbally or in writing and may be made:

- directly to the Property Manager or Board Member
- by telephone;

- by email;
- by letter; or
- through an authorised representative acting on behalf of the tenant.

Tenants may be represented or accompanied at any meeting relating to their complaint.

Complaints submitted by representatives will be handled in accordance with this policy.

4. COMPLAINTS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

Complaints should normally be raised within twelve months of:

- the matter occurring; or
- the tenant becoming aware of the matter.

Beer CLT will consider whether there are good reasons to accept complaints made outside this period.

Complaints will not normally be considered where:

- the matter has already completed Beer CLT's complaints process and no significant new information has become available;
- legal proceedings have commenced in relation to the matter complained of; or
- the matter falls outside Beer CLT's responsibilities as landlord.

Where Beer CLT decides not to accept a complaint, we will provide the tenant with a written explanation of our decision together with details of how the matter may be referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

5. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS

Beer CLT will acknowledge, define and record all Stage One complaints within five working days of receipt.

The acknowledgement will:

- confirm our understanding of the complaint;
- identify the outcome the tenant is seeking;
- clarify any matters requiring further explanation;
- explain which aspects of the complaint Beer CLT is responsible for where appropriate.

A full Stage One response will normally be provided within ten working days of acknowledgement.

Where additional time is required, Beer CLT will:

- explain the reasons for the delay;
- provide an expected response date;

- provide details of the Housing Ombudsman Service; and
- keep the tenant appropriately informed of progress.

Any extension will not normally exceed ten additional working days unless there is good reason for doing so.

The Stage One response will confirm:

- the complaint definition;
- Beer CLT's decision;
- the reasons for that decision;
- details of any remedy offered;
- any outstanding actions to be completed; and
- how the complaint may be escalated to Stage Two should the tenant remain dissatisfied.

6. STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS

If the tenant remains dissatisfied following the Stage One response, they may request that their complaint progresses to Stage Two.

Tenants are not required to explain why they remain dissatisfied.

Beer CLT will acknowledge and record Stage Two complaints within five working days of receipt.

Stage Two represents Beer CLT's final response under its complaints procedure.

Stage Two complaints will normally be considered by the Chair of Beer Community Land Trust provided they have had no previous involvement in the matter complained of. Where this is not possible, another Board member who has had no previous involvement will consider the complaint.

A Stage Two response will normally be provided within twenty working days of acknowledgement.

Where additional time is required Beer CLT will:

- explain the reasons for the delay;
- provide an expected response date;
- provide details of the Housing Ombudsman Service; and
- keep the tenant appropriately informed of progress.

Any extension will not normally exceed twenty additional working days unless there is good reason for doing so.

The Stage Two response will confirm:

- the complaint definition;

- Beer CLT's decision;
- the reasons for that decision;
- details of any remedy offered;
- any outstanding actions to be completed; and
- how the complaint may be referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Stage Two represents Beer CLT's final response.

7. PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

Where Beer CLT identifies failings in its service, we will seek to provide an appropriate and proportionate remedy.

This may include:

- apologising;
- acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- completing outstanding works;
- reconsidering or changing decisions;
- correcting records;
- providing financial remedies where appropriate;
- changing policies, procedures or working practices.

Outstanding actions will continue to be monitored and tenants will be kept informed of progress.

8. LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Beer CLT recognises that complaints provide valuable opportunities for learning and improvement.

The Management Board will consider whether complaints identify:

- opportunities to improve services;
- changes required to policies or procedures;
- additional training requirements;
- improvements to communication with tenants.

An annual report will be prepared which includes:

- the number of complaints received;
- complaint outcomes;
- learning identified from complaints;
- changes made as a result of complaints;
- tenant satisfaction findings where available; and
- the Management Board's annual complaints handling self-assessment.

9. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

Tenants may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any stage of their complaint for advice and guidance.

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484
Unit D
Preston
PR2 0ET

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Beer CLT will provide assistance where appropriate to enable tenants to access the Housing Ombudsman Service.

10. PUBLICATION OF THIS POLICY

This policy will be:

- published on the Beer CLT website;
- made available to tenants upon request;
- reviewed annually by the Management Board; and
- updated where required following changes to legislation, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code or learning identified through complaints received.

Beer CLT is committed to ensuring this policy remains accessible, proportionate and easy to understand.

Service Request Form	
Reference (SR#)	
Name	
Property	
Date	
CLT Person Contacted	
Nature of Service Request	
Is there a dangerous fault or something needing urgent attention	
Are there any other factors to be consider	
Has this been reported to anyone else or any action taken to date	
Beer CLT to Complete	
SR acknowledged within 72 hours, logged, defined and responded within 5 days	
Are the works Beer CLT responsibility	
If no, respond to tenant and agree how to proceed	
Identify remedial action to be taken where CLT responsibility	
Action to be taken reported to tenant	
If cost estimated to be over £500 has the Chair given approval	
If cost estimated to be over £1000 has the board given approval	

Has the work been ordered, and date	
Who will do the work	
Has the work been completed satisfactorily	
Is the tenant satisfied with the outcome	
Has the tenant any comments on the work	
Complaint Form	
Reference (C#)	
Name	
Property	
Date	
CLT Person Contacted	
Nature of Complaint	
Is there a dangerous fault or something needing urgent attention	
Are there any other factors to be consider	
Has this been reported to anyone else or any action taken to date	

Beer CLT to Complete	
Complaint acknowledged, logged, defined and responded as Stage 1 to the complainant within 5 days	
Are there any reasons why Stage 1 response needs additional time	
Full Stage 1 response within 10 days of acknowledgement	
Does the tenant accept the full Stage 1 findings? (If not proceed to Stage 2)	
Stage 2 acknowledged within 5 days	
Stage 2 full report within 20 days	
Does the tenant accept the Stage 2 findings	
If not ensure tenant knows they can refer the Complaint to the HO and assist as necessary	
Is the tenant going to refer the Complaint to the HO	

Outcome of the Complaint	
Action	
Cost	
Learning	
Changes recommended to procedures	