

# Complaints Policy

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## 1. Amendment Record

<b>Amendment Reference</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Page No</b>	<b>Amendment Details</b>	<b>Amendment Date</b>	<b>Requested By</b>
CP/1/2724	0	1	Remove reference to 'compliments'	Feb 2024	RM
CP/2/2724	1	3	Removal of the word compliments.	Feb 2024	RM
CP/3/2724	4.1	5-6	Updated wording to align with housing ombudsman	Feb 2024	RM
CP/4/2724	4.2	6	Updated timescales to align with housing ombudsman	Feb 2024	RM
CP/6/2724	5	7	Updated timescales to align with housing ombudsman.	Feb 2024	RM
CP/5/2724	7	9	Removal of reference to compliments	Feb 2024	RM
CP/7/2724	9	10	Updated timescales within flow chart to align with the housing ombudsman.	Feb 2024	RM
CP/8/2724	9.3	10-11	Amendments and updated wording to 'stage 2' and 'stage 3' to be in line with	Feb 2024	RM

			housing ombudsman.		
CP/9/2724	9.5	12	Changes to stages 1/2 & 3 timescales.	Feb 2024	RM
CP/10/2724	9.6	13	Changes to extension timescales.	Feb 2024	RM
CP/11/2724	9.11	15	Updated contact information	Feb 2024	RM
CP/12/2724	Appendix 1	16	Updated flow chart and updated contact information	Feb 2024	RM
CP/13/2724	Appendix 1	16/17	Updated departments and updated timescales	Feb 2024	RM
CP/14/2724	Multiple Sections		Updated layout and structure to align with latest YMCA TGG Policy Management Framework (PMF) Standards	Feb 2024	AF

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## **3. Purpose**

### **3.1 Overview**

The YMCA TGG is committed to providing a high quality, transparent and accessible service to everyone who uses its services. In order to do this, we need you to tell us when we get things wrong. We want to help resolve your complaint as quickly as possible.

We handle any expression of dissatisfaction with our service which calls for a response as a complaint. We listen to your complaints, treat them seriously, and learn from them so that we can continuously improve our service.

This policy details the protocol for dealing with Complaints and Concerns received about any aspect of the care, treatment and service provided by YMCA TGG.

## **4. Scope and Compliance**

### **4.1 Scope**

YMCA TGG believes that if a service user wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is each department's responsibility to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve and provide better services.

This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by service users, their relatives and carers are taken seriously.

Complaints allow issues to be resolved before it becomes worse. When issues are not resolved quickly it can take significant resources and time to remedy. Good complaint handling promotes positive relationships between the company and customers, while providing senior staff with essential insight into day-to-day operations allowing them to assess effectiveness and drive a positive complaint handling culture.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation. It is NOT part of YMCA TGG's disciplinary policy. YMCA TGG believe that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, service user dissatisfaction and possible litigation. YMCA TGG supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly and honestly can be sorted out at a local level between just the complainant and the department. If this fails due to either the department, or

the complainant being dissatisfied with the result, the complaint will be referred to the appropriate Director and legal advice may be taken as necessary.

## 4.2 Compliance

- The aim of YMCA TGG is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented, and that service users feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.
- Service users, carers, and their representatives are aware of how to complain, and that each establishment provide easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- A named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- Every written complaint is acknowledged within five working days (Mon-Fri).
- Investigations are held for all written complaints.
- All complaints are responded to in writing by the relevant department within 10 working days.

YMCA TGG believes that wherever possible, complaints are best dealt with on a local level between the complainant and the department. If either of the parties is not satisfied by a local process the case should be referred to the Executive team.

## 5. Principles

### 5.1 Our standards for handling complaints:

- We can receive complaints face to face, by letter or email.
- We can provide support to any individual who feel they want to make a complaint but unable to do so using these routes.
- We treat all complaints seriously.
- You can expect to be treated with courtesy, respect and fairness at all times. We expect that you will also treat our staff dealing with your complaint with the same courtesy, respect and fairness.
- We will treat your complaint in confidence.
- We will deal with your service complaint promptly. We will acknowledge receipt of a written complaint within five working days (Mon- Fri) where we have a return address and you can expect to have a written response within 10 working days. If for any reason we are unable to provide you with a written response within 10 working days, we will contact you to give you the

reason why and let you know when we will be able to reply with a written response, keeping you fully informed of progress.

- We will not treat you less favourably than anyone else because of your:
  - i) sex
  - ii) legal marital or same-sex partnership status: this includes family status, responsibility for dependants, and gender
  - iii) sexual orientation
  - iv) colour or race: this includes ethnic or national origin or nationality
  - v) disability
  - vi) religious or political beliefs, or trade union affiliation.

YMCA TGG recognises that other forms of discrimination exist which may not have been specified in the list mentioned above. We are committed to the overall general principles of fairness and equal access to the association's services and employment and will take appropriate action where inequalities are identified.

## **5.2 Our policy covers complaints about:**

- The standard of service you should expect from us
- The behaviour of our staff in delivering that service
- Any action, or lack of action, by our staff or others engaged or employed on behalf of YMCA TGG

## **5.3 Our complaints policy does not cover:**

- Comments about our policies or policy decisions
- Dissatisfaction or complaints expressed with our policies or decisions about individual cases, funding, or requests for legal advice and assistance
- Matters that have already been fully investigated through this complaints procedure
- Anonymous complaints

# **6. Policy Instruments**

## **6.1 Third party reporting**

Complainants may wish to have a third-party act on their behalf. A third party is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for the complainant.

For example:

- Advice organisations
- Professionals such as social workers, community psychiatric nurses, doctors or solicitors
- Family members or friends

Where a third party is helping a complainant with a particular complaint, we will need written consent to that effect. Where we have this authority, we will endeavour to take all possible steps to keep the third party informed of progress on the complaint.

## 6.2 Confidentiality

All complaints received will be dealt with confidentially and in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations, subject to the need to disclose information as required by statutory authorities, and/or as a result of statutory or legal obligations placed on the Charity.

## 7. Definitions

- 7.1. **Service user:** Anyone using any of the services offered by YMCA TGG. Commonly, this means members, residents, customers and/or their carers, relatives and visitors.
- 7.2. **GDPR:** General Data Protection Regulation (which comes into effect from May 2018)
- 7.3. **Complaint:** A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether oral or written, and whether justified or not, from or on behalf of an eligible complainant about the firm's provision of, or failure to provide, a service. (*e.g. a service user complaining about faulty equipment at the gym or express dissatisfaction with a meal served in the diner*)
- 7.4. **Concern:** A Concern is an issue raised by a service user that is not serious or complex, which can be addressed promptly with minimal intervention. It could require a written response. (*e.g. a service user raising a concern that a table is wobbly and may eventually break and hurt someone*)
- 7.5. **Complainant:** A complainant in terms of this policy, is anyone receiving services from YMCA TGG affected or likely to be affected by the behaviour of the staff/Charity. The bottom line is that if a customer or anyone who comes into contact with our staff expresses dissatisfaction verbally or in



writing then we need to put things right. A complainant is a person who has an issue and is making it known.

## 8. Duties

All staff have responsibility to treat anyone making a complaint with courtesy, respect and fairness by providing appropriate information about our complaint process and where necessary assist with making a record of complaints received via our central reporting system.

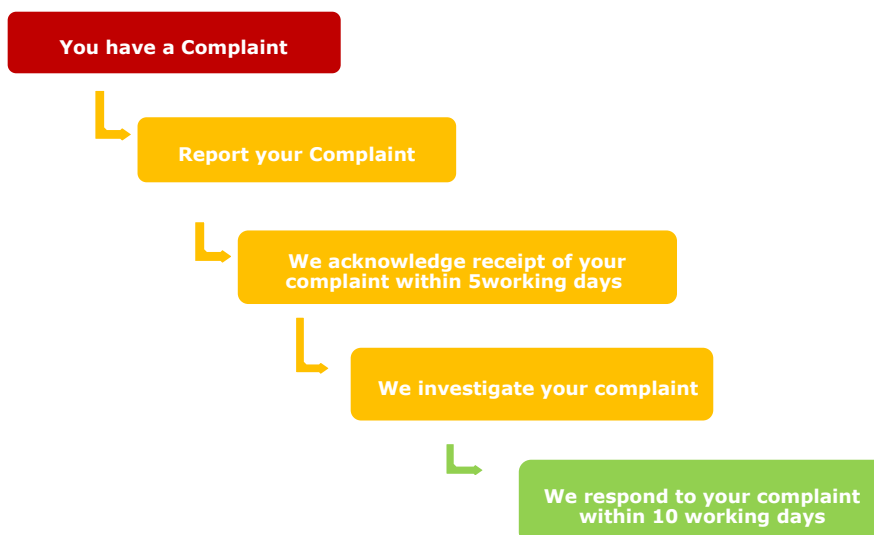
Departmental Managers and delegated Project Leads are responsible for responding to and resolving Stage One complaints within the timescales laid out within this policy.

Head of Departments are responsible for resolving complaints that escalate to Stage Two. To ensure compliance as per the housing ombudsman point 5.3 housing complaints must be resolved by stage two.

In the unusual situation where a complaint reaches Stage Three then the relevant Departmental Director has responsibility resolve the complaint.

## 9. Complaints process

### 9.1 Complaints process flow chart



## 9.2 How to complain to us

If you wish to make a complaint, you can do so face-to-face, by email or letter. Our contact details are outlined in section 9.10 Contacting Us. If you require adjustments, let us know and we will try and put those arrangements in place where we can.

## 9.3 Complaint procedure

We have three-stage complaints handling procedure, explained below. At each stage it will help us to resolve your complaint quickly if you can give us as much clarity and detail as possible, including providing any documents and correspondence and stating that you are making a complaint. If we do not have all the details required to deal with the complaint, we may contact you and ask you for further information. Each department is responsible for managing the handling of complaints including notifying you of the outcome.

**STAGE 1:** This is the first opportunity for us to resolve your complaint. We expect the majority of complaints to be resolved at this stage. On receipt of your complaint we will contact the Project Lead e.g. Nursery Supervisor, Housing Lead, Youth Team leader and ask them to respond to your complaint. This includes any service complaints about our former services where we still retain relevant information. The Department Manager will be notified of the complaint for their information at this stage.

**STAGE 2:** If you are dissatisfied with the response at stage 1, you may request a review. This will be carried out by the responsible Department Manager, your request together with all subsequent correspondence relating to your complaint should be sent to the relevant department either by post or dropped off at the YMCA TGG reception where it will be forwarded to the relevant Department lead to be reviewed. As per the housing ombudsman point 5.3 housing complaints must be resolved by stage two.

**STAGE 3:** If you are dissatisfied with the response at stage 2 on any other departments other than housing, you again have the right to request a review. This will be carried out by the responsible director within the department; your request together with all subsequent correspondence relating to your complaint should be sent either by post or dropped off at the YMCA TGG reception where it will be forwarded to the relevant department lead to be reviewed.

## 9.4 If you are still dissatisfied

If having followed the three internal stages of our complaints procedure you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to contact a designated external body/person to look at your complaint.

**For housing services this should be:**

Housing Ombudsmen Service  
Exchange Tower  
Harbour Exchange Square  
London  
E14 9GE

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

(lines are open Monday to Friday from 9:15 to 17:15)

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

You have the right to refer your complaints to the Housing Ombudsmen service directly, but only eight weeks after the closure of your complaint with us. They will only investigate your complaints after it has been through our internal complaints procedure.

**For children's services this could be:**

Ofsted National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Alternatively, a designated person may be:

- A Member of Parliament (MP)
- A Local Councillor

You will be expected to provide the following:

- A copy of your original written complaint
- An account of the findings given by us
- Any action taken or that is proposed to be taken by us
- The reasons why you are not satisfied with our response

If your complaint is in writing, include a telephone number in case they need to contact you.

## 9.5 Timescales

**Stage 1:** We will acknowledge complaints within five working days of receiving each complaint. We will send a full response within ten working days of receiving each complaint.

**Stage 2:** We will acknowledge complaints within five working days of receiving each complaint. We will send a full response within 20 working days of receiving each complaint.

**Stage 3:** We will acknowledge complaints within five working days of receiving each complaint. We will send a full response within 20 working days of receiving each complaint.

## 9.6 Extending time limits

We aim to complete our investigation into all complaints received about our service within the timescales set out above. However, in a limited number of cases - for example, if a complaint is very complex or requires significant investigations, it may be necessary to extend the time limit to ensure we have all the information necessary to deal with it. If this is the case we will keep you informed of progress with the investigation, the reasons for the delay, and inform you of next steps.

Stage 1 extensions must be no more 10-day extensions without good reason and the reason must be explained clearly to the customer.

Stage 2 extensions must be no more than 20-day extensions without good reason and the reason must be explained clearly to the customer.

On both stage 1 and 2 extensions to any housing complaints, the resident should be provided the contact details of the ombudsman.

## 9.7 Recording complaints

Complaint details, outcomes and actions taken are recorded by us and used for service improvement. We record all complaints we receive, we use the information received to also track the reoccurring complaints and we use these to help us understand what types of problems are most prevalent, and how well we are doing to resolve them. Complaints are logged by our using a central recording system. Complaints made be logged by service users or members of staff. A monthly summary report is produced and reviewed by the Executive Team on a monthly basis.

We value your feedback and expect to use it to help us to:

- Get things right in the future if we have not done so already
- Become more customer focused
- Be more open and accountable
- Act fairly and proportionately seek continuous improvement

### **9.8 How to compliment us**

We have a formal process for recognising and responding to compliments in order to share and build on good practice.

Compliments may be logged by service users or members of staff via our central recording system.

Details of the compliment will then be forwarded to the appropriate Department Manager to be shared with the team and used to inform future development and shared as good practice.

### **9.9 Monitoring compliance of this policy**

This policy will be monitored by the Quality and Compliance team by performing regular audits of complaints made within each department and the process followed in dealing with each one.

### **9.10 Contacting us**

All complaints and requests for review under our complaints procedure should be sent as follows:

By post:

Customer Services  
YMCA Thames Gateway Group  
29 Rush Green Road  
Romford  
Essex  
RM7 0PH

Through our website: [www.ymcatg.org](http://www.ymcatg.org)

By telephone: 01708 766211

If you are unable to contact us in writing as above, and require support or adjustments because you are a disabled person, please contact us.

## 9.11 Reporting your complaint

To begin an inquiry into your complaint, please:

1. Complete this form with as much information as you can
2. Submit your complaint:

By post:

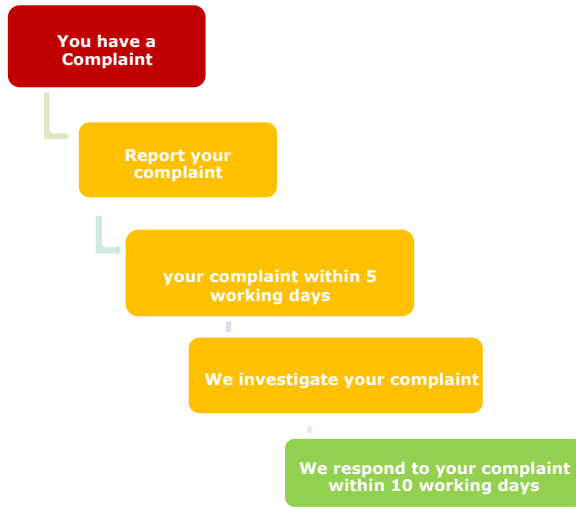
Customer Services  
YMCA Thames Gateway Group  
29 Rush Green Road  
Romford  
Essex  
RM7 0PH

Through our website: [www.ymcatg.org](http://www.ymcatg.org)

If you are unable to contact us in writing as above and require support to report your complaint, please contact us on 01708 766211.

3. YMCA Thames Gateway Group will then:

- Send a copy of your completed form to the department in question to obtain a response.
- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 5 working days.
- Investigate your complaint. This will include contacting other individuals named in your complaint form that may have information relevant to the complaint. They may receive a copy of your completed form. We will review all information received to enable us to conclude our investigation.
- Provide you with a written response within 10 working days of receiving your complaint, and advise you of what you can do if you are not satisfied with our response.



## 10. Appendix 1 - feedback form

Full name of person giving the feedback:			
Contact details - Address:			
Email:			
Telephone:			
Preferred contact method:	Email <input type="checkbox"/>	In Person <input type="checkbox"/>	Tel <input type="checkbox"/> Post <input type="checkbox"/> No contact <input type="checkbox"/>
Please specify department you wish to provide feedback regarding: (Tick)			
Housing <input type="checkbox"/>	Health & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/>	Youth Services <input type="checkbox"/>	
Children's Services <input type="checkbox"/>	Catering Services <input type="checkbox"/>	Property <input type="checkbox"/>	
Room hire <input type="checkbox"/>	Customer service <input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning <input type="checkbox"/>	
Chaplin services <input type="checkbox"/>			
Type of feedback:	Compliment <input type="checkbox"/> Complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Details of your Feedback (please give as much detail as possible):			



If making a complaint, please give an indication of how you would like your complaint resolved:	
Signature:	
Date:	
<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	
Compliment/complaint reference:	
Name of staff member dealing with feedback:	
Date feedback received:	
Date feedback acknowledged sent: (Within 5 working days)	
Date Dept Head notified of the feedback:	
Actions taken in response to the feedback:	
If a complaint, date investigation complete:	
If a complaint, date service user written to: (Within 10 working days)	