

## Feedback Policy

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Our mission is to provide young people in Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire with a safe place they can stay, people they can trust and support to fulfil their potential. As a youth-led organisation our young people's views are important to us and guide our service development. Receiving and acting on feedback enables YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire to learn from issues that arise and improve our service to ensure that we provide young people with a safe place to stay and people they can trust.

### **2. KEY PRINCIPLES**

- 2.1 Key principles of our feedback policy:
- The process to feedback on our service (either complaints or compliments) is easily accessible to all and can be done verbally, via our feedback form, in writing or by social media.
  - All feedback is taken seriously and responded to effectively, fairly and promptly, regardless of the format in which it is received.
  - All feedback is valuable to the organisation as it provides insight into day-to-day operations and can help the organisation improve. Receiving and acting on complaints allows issues to be resolved as soon as possible.
  - Staff are involved in responding to and resolving issues to develop ownership, decision-making and engagement.
  - Responding to, and acting on, feedback promotes a positive relationship and allows us to co-create services with our young people.
  - Complaints are managed in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Code.

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

3.1 Feedback is any comment on our staff or service – compliments and complaints.

3.2 A complaint is defined as:

*"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 or group."*

3.3 Examples of complaints are about the standard of service received from a staff member, repairs not completed on time or repairs not completed to a high enough standard.

3.4 The following are not complaints:

- a) Reports of incidents or issues caused by young people. These should be recorded as a concern, and if necessary managed by the relevant Supported Housing Coach or Manager in accordance with our Positive Change Policy. It is not classed as a complaint unless the young person refers to repeated issues and specifically requests to complain about the way YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire is managing the issue.
- b) Service requests for maintenance or chasers of service requests - because to do so would delay the issue being addressed. These are only treated as complaints if the young person specifically requests it is treated as a complaint; if the issue cannot be resolved; or if we have missed our stated response time. In this case, efforts to address the service request must continue as well as addressing the complaint.
- c) Support chasers, such as a missed appointment. These should be resolved immediately and not considered as a complaint unless the young person specifically wishes to record a complaint.
- d) Survey feedback. Although this is not considered as a complaint, surveys should include information on how to make a complaint.

3.5 A compliment is defined as:

*"an expression of praise or admiration"*

3.6 The word “complaint” or “compliment” does not have to be used for the feedback to be treated as a such. Whenever a resident expresses dissatisfaction, staff must give the resident the choice to make a complaint. A complaint submitted by a third party, such as a parent, must be handled in line with this policy. This ensures that we take into account our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments.

#### **4. ACCESSIBILITY AND AWARENESS**

4.1 Feedback can be received in person, via a feedback form, in writing (which includes email) or via social media.

4.2 YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire’s feedback process is provided to all young people as part of their introduction to our service and is well publicised, for example:

- a) in housing move in packs;
- b) available on our website; and
- c) summarised whenever we seek feedback from the young people that we serve (e.g. through our annual Resident Satisfaction Survey).

#### **5. CATEGORISING AND ACTIONING FEEDBACK**

5.1 Regardless of the format in which the feedback is received, it must first be categorised. There are three groups of feedback – each of which are handled differently. These are outlined in the table below.

<b>Feedback type</b>	<b>Action</b>
Compliment	Acknowledged and recorded.
Concern about behaviour of other residents	Acknowledged and managed by staff member receiving the report. Advice provided and recorded if necessary. Relevant Supported Housing Coach or Manager informed if necessary.
Complaint about service or staff	Investigated by the management team, response provided in writing. Recorded by Executive Assistant to the C.E.O.

#### **6. RESPONDING TO COMPLIMENTS**

- 6.1 Compliments are an important type of feedback; they tell us what is working well in our service and they should be celebrated. Managers are encouraged to do this in their team meetings, so that learning can be shared with relevant members of the team.
- 6.2 If the compliment comes in the form of a gratitude (for example flowers, cake or chocolates) staff must be aware of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. The gesture should be logged as a compliment, but staff should also refer to the Professional Boundaries policy for guidance. Gratitude's wherever possible should be shared across the whole team. Gratitude's should be notified to a manager before any other action is taken (e.g. eaten!).

## **7. RECEIVING COMPLAINTS**

- 7.1 The Complaint Handling Team at YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire is made up of managers, heads of department and members of the senior leadership team (subsequently collectively referred to as Managers). These staff members are appropriately trained to handle complaints, and the complaint is passed to an appropriate member of the team. This team acts sensitively and fairly, is trained to deal with distressed young people, can facilitate quick resolution of complaints and has the authority and autonomy to resolve disputes fairly.
- 7.2 Complaints about **service** are handled by the appropriate manager. If escalated to stage 2, they are managed by the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 7.3 Complaints about **staff** are handled by the relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team. If these are escalated to stage 2, they are managed by the Deputy C.E.O. or the C.E.O.

### *Complaints which will not be considered or escalated*

- 7.4 Any complaint will be considered based on its individual circumstances. Examples of issues that will not be considered under our complaints procedure are:
  - Complaints that are about an issue that occurred over 12 months ago - unless relating to health and safety or safeguarding, when Manager discretion will be applied.
  - Issues that have previously been considered through our complaints process.

- Complaints where the complainant has begun legal proceedings.

7.5 In these cases a detailed explanation will be given to the person raising the issue as to why it is not suitable to be considered complaints process and setting out the right to take that decision to the relevant body (e.g. Housing Ombudsman).

## **8. OUR APPROACH TO COMPLAINT HANDLING**

8.1 Complaints are logged and acknowledged within 3 working days of receiving the complaint. Complaints are investigated thoroughly and a response is provided to the complainant within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, unless an extension is needed to allow full investigation, in which case this is agreed with the complainant in advance.

8.2 The complainant, and if applicable, any staff member, are given a fair chance to set out their position and comment on any findings before any final decision is made.

8.3 All investigations are conducted in an independent and impartial manner, dealing with the complaint on its merits and addressing any actual or perceived conflict of interest. All information and evidence is considered carefully and kept as confidential as possible, only disclosing information that is necessary to properly investigate.

8.4 Following investigation, the complainant is provided with a written response. Where something has gone wrong, YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire acknowledges this.

8.5 The response must address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for decisions, referencing relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. It must set out the actions YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right. Any remedy offered must reflect the impact on the young person as a result of any fault identified. YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire will carefully manage the expectations of the complainant and does not agree to anything that cannot be delivered or would cause unfairness to others. This will be following discussion with the complainant where appropriate.

8.6 We make reasonable adjustments for residents where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Any reasonable adjustment is recorded on In-Form, as well as any disabilities a resident has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments are kept under active review.

- 8.7 YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire also looks beyond the circumstances of the individual complainant, identifying process or system changes that will improve our service more generally. Guidance issued by the Housing Ombudsman is taken into account where applicable. All actions to put things right are followed through to resolution and updates provided to the complainant where appropriate.
- 8.8 Where the complainant is not satisfied with YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire's response, they may escalate their complaint to our stage 2 complaint handling procedure within 1 month of receiving our response, any escalation later than this will be considered as to whether it would be more appropriate to escalate or to open a new complaint at stage 1. At this stage, the complaint must be acknowledged, defined and logged within 3 days of the escalation being received. It must then be investigated within 20 working days of escalation, unless an extension is needed, in which case this is agreed with the complainant in advance. Stage 2 is YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire's final response.
- 8.9 If they are unhappy with the outcome of YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire's investigations, they can escalate their complaint to the appropriate body. For complaints regarding our housing service, this is the Housing Ombudsman, see section 10 below.
- 8.10 If the young person's behaviour is deemed unacceptable when pursuing the complaint, we follow the relevant Positive Change Process, and evidence for this must be recorded.

## **9. RECORD KEEPING**

- 9.1 Compliments and complaints regarding our housing service are recorded on our Housing Management Database. We keep full records of complaints, including all correspondence, any review and the outcomes at each stage, unless the complaint relates to a specific member of staff. In this case, brief details of the complaint are recorded on In-Form, and detail is recorded on the Managers Drive or HR Drive, depending on the nature of the complaint.
- 9.2 Compliments regarding our non-residential services are saved on the appropriate database.

## **10. HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE**

10.1 The Housing Ombudsman Service is available at any time to help residents understand the complaints process or to help residents make a complaint. A resident can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time during the complaint process. All written correspondence with a complainant, at any time during the complaint process, must include information about the Housing Ombudsman Service.

10.2 The Housing Ombudsman can investigate if the young person wants to complain about the way YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire has handled a complaint.

Tel: 0300 111 3000

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

Post: Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 152  
Liverpool  
L33 7WQ

## **11. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

11.1 Receiving and responding to feedback procedure for Housing Team

11.2 Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

11.3 Equal Opportunities Policy

11.4 Positive Change Policy

11.5 Positive Change procedure

11.6 Professional Boundaries Policy

## **12. CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT**

12.1 YMCA Milton Keynes and Northamptonshire carries out an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaints Code to ensure complaint handling remains in line with requirements. Self-assessment would also be done if there is significant re-structure and/or change in procedures. The outcome of any self-assessment is reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees.

12.2 Complaints and compliments can help identify issues and can lead to improvements in service delivery. Complaints and compliments are recorded in our monthly KPIs which are reported to the Senior Leadership Team, the Board Member Responsible for Complaints and the Board of Trustees. This allows for senior management to identify trends, systemic issues, risks or policies and procedures that require revision. They also inform staff training. Wider learning, trends and improvements relating to complaints are reported as they occur to staff and, if relevant, to the Senior Leadership Team. These are reported annually to the Senior Leadership Team, the Board Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) and the Board of Trustees in our "Annual Feedback Performance and Service Improvement Report".

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Version 2.1	June 2024	Minor amendments to reflect the changes made to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code	Nicola Walker	Current
Version 2	February 2024	Completely revised and updated to reflect our Housing Management Database, revised organisational structure and the Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code.	Nicola Walker	Superseded
Version 1	2002	Original	Unknown	Superseded



**Here for young people**  
**Here for communities**  
**Here for you**

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HOUSING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SUPPORT & ADVICE