

106 Client Feedback and Complaints Policy

1. Policy

Link Housing respects the rights of its clients to complain or provide compliments or suggestions about the service they receive from us. We are committed to handling feedback and complaints in a respectful, confidential and timely manner.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all tenants, applicants, support partners, stakeholders and community members.

3. Principles

- Link Housing welcomes feedback and complaints
- We will advertise this policy and avenues available to provide feedback and complaints
- The policy will be fair and easy to understand
- Clients can use an advocate or support person
- We will maintain a record of the feedback and complaints we receive and our responses to them
- Outcomes of feedback and complaints will be used to inform our reviews of policy and practice
- We will respond and give an outcome in writing within the timeframe stated in this policy
- We will keep clients informed if there are any delays

4. Definition of Feedback and Complaints

Feedback is information provided by our clients about a program, product or service we did or did not deliver or a suggestion for improvement. This may include a compliment, suggestion or complaint that allows Link Housing to understand what we do well, what we need to improve, and where we've under performed.

5. Avenues to Give Feedback and Make Complaints

Feedback can be:

- Posted to Link Housing Ltd, PO Box 5124 Chatswood West NSW 2067
- Emailed to feedback@linkhousing.org.au
- Sent through an online feedback form at www.linkhousing.org.au
- Provided over the phone on (02) 9412 5111, or direct lines or mobile numbers
- By text
- Provided in person, using the feedback form at our office
- At an off-site location (i.e. event or tenant home)

6. Suggestions

Suggestions provide positive ideas that Link Housing can consider in their operations. We will acknowledge formal suggestions within two working days and give them our due consideration.

7. Compliments

Link Housing values their staff and compliments are an important mechanism to identify where we have performed well or delivered successful programs and events.

Compliments are welcomed because they:

- Indicate the services and programs that clients value
- Assist in recognising staff who provide exceptional service in their daily duties
- Recognise staff who demonstrate Link Housing's values
- Provide us with an opportunity to share examples of best practice in service delivery

Compliments will be:

- Registered in the compliments register
- Acknowledged in writing
- Forwarded to the relevant staff member and their manager, recognised appropriately and recorded in their personnel file
- Certificates of Appreciation will be displayed in our public areas

8. Complaints

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard or type of service provided. If a client is unhappy with any part of the service that Link Housing provides, we would like to know so that we can attempt to resolve the matter and improve our service. Complaints will be handled equitably, objectively and in an unbiased manner. Clients will not be treated differently if they make a complaint.

Complaints are welcome because they provide an opportunity for us to:

- resolve an issue
- review our processes
- improve our services

8.1 Examples of complaints

Clients are:

- Dissatisfied with a service that was or was not provided
- Dissatisfied with a change of service or withdrawal of a service
- Unable to contact a staff member or a staff member is not returning calls
- Dissatisfied that repairs were not completed within time frames
- Link has not followed its policies and procedures

8.2 Matters that are not managed under this policy

The below matters are managed under other policies and procedures, unless the complaint is related to the handling of these matters by Link Housing staff.

- A request to review a decision is dealt with through the Appeals Policy
- Matters that are the responsibility of other tribunals and courts e.g. NCAT or the Administrative Appeals Tribunal
- Matters not directly related to the person making the complaint
Neighbour/tenant disputes are dealt with through the Anti -Social Behaviour policy
- A request for a service.

8.3 Steps to resolving an issue

8.3.1 Initial Contact

If a client is unhappy with the service Link Housing has provided, they are encouraged to discuss their matter with the person they were originally dealing with. If the client is not comfortable talking to that staff member, they can contact Link Housing's Client Service Team (9412 5111), who will arrange for them to discuss the matter with that person's manager. In most cases, we can resolve issues through this first step.

The initial contact will be considered to be informal.

Note: if a tenant wants to make a complaint about a decision that Link Housing has made the tenant should make an appeal against the decision. See the Appeals Policy.

8.3.2 Formal complaint

If a client is not satisfied with the outcome of an informal complaint, they can put their complaint in writing and outline why they are making a formal complaint. If the complaint is made verbally, Link Housing staff will take the details of the formal complaint on the client's behalf.

Formal complaints will be:

- Registered in the complaints register
- Acknowledged in writing within 2 working days, advising of the date for a response
- Investigated and considered by the manager for that work area
- Responded to in writing and an outcome given within 21 days unless the person reviewing the matter is unable to speak to the parties involved. In this case, we will contact the complainant and advise of any delay
- The response will include details of what to do next if the client is still unhappy

8.3.3 Formal complaint (Escalated)

If a client remains unhappy after completing a formal complaint, they can request that the complaint be escalated to a formal complaint.

Escalated complaints will be:

- Registered in the complaints register
- Acknowledged in writing within 24 hours, advising of the date for a response
- Reviewed by the relevant senior manager, executive manager or board member who was not substantially involved in reviewing the formal complaint
- Responded to in writing within 21 days unless the person reviewing the matter is unable to speak to the parties involved. In this case, we will contact the complainant within 21 days and advise of any delay.
- The response will include details of what to do next if the client is still unhappy

9. External Complaints

If a client remains unhappy with the outcome of their complaint, they can complain to the **Registrar of Community Housing** either online at <http://www.rch.nsw.gov.au/>, by calling 1800 330 940 or by post to Locked Bag 4001, Ashfield BC NSW 1800. The Registrar of Community Housing ensures that registered community housing providers meet their responsibilities set out in the National Law and National Regulatory Code.

If a tenant believes Link Housing has breached the conditions of their rental agreement they can seek to resolve the issue through the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) at www.ncat.nsw.gov.au

Clients who believe Link Housing has breached its obligations under the Property, Stock and Business Agents Act, 2002 and feel their issue was not addressed effectively can complain to the NSW Fair Trading 13 32 20 or can lodge a complaint on line [here](#)

Clients who want to lodge an external complaint in relation to people living in Link Housing's properties for people with a disability can go to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, 1800 035 544.

10. Who can complain?

- Someone on their own behalf
- Someone who is responsible for the person who has a complaint
- Someone who is the support person or advocate of the person, as long as they have the consent of that person. A signed consent form must be provided or be on file if the client wants Link Housing to liaise directly with a third party.

11. Right to withdraw a complaint

A client has the right to withdraw a complaint at any time and they do not have to provide a reason. It is preferred that this be done in writing but it does not have to be.

12. Assistance in Making a Complaint

Link Housing staff may assist a client to lodge their complaint. We will take into account culture and language issues and will ensure it is easy for clients to make complaints.

Where required or requested, Link Housing will access the services of a support person, advocate or Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

13. Advocacy and Support

| Assistance can be requested from | Contact Details | Website |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Link Housing Client Services Team (CST) | (02) 9412 5111 | www.linkhousing.org.au |
| Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service | (02) 8117 3700 | www.tenants.org.au |
| Northern Sydney Area Tenants Service (NSATS) | (02) 8198 8650 | www.nsats.org |
| Greater Sydney Aboriginal Tenants Service | (02) 9698 0873 | www.nswats.com.au |
| Office of Fair Trading | 13 32 20 1800 451 301 | www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au |
| The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal | 1300 006 228 | www.ncat.nsw.gov.au |
| Translating and Interpreting Service | 13 14 50 | www.tisnational.gov.au |
| NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission | 1800 035 544 | https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/participants/complaints |

14. Legislative Framework

- Community Housing Providers (Adoption of National Law Act 2012 (NSW))
- Residential Tenancy Act 2010
- [National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013](#)

15. Related Policies

- Appeals Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Privacy Policy

16. Privacy and Confidentiality

Link Housing will keep applicants', tenants' and residents' information and feedback confidential, in line with privacy laws and standards.

17. Quality Assurance

The Client Feedback policy will be formally reviewed as required through a sufficient change in circumstances or every two years.