

## C1.14 Complaints Policy



### Policy Statement

This policy applies to all expressions of dissatisfaction associated with a service provided by CENSW or the quality of a service received by a customer.

We will endeavour to recognise the implicit language of complaints with the intent of resolving a complaint at the initial complaint stage rather than at escalation formal complaint point and monitor all informal and formal feedback for our service improvement.

Complaints can be anonymous, however, its noted that the preservation of anonymity may reduce the effectiveness of the complaint review and formal response.

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To ensure CENSW's complaints platform is underpinned by principles of effectiveness, accessibility, procedural fairness, and transparency.
- 1.2. To ensure complaints can be made, and without fear of disadvantage or recrimination.
- 1.3. All feedback is welcomed, including complaints are welcomed and ultimately inform CENSW service improvement practices.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all complaints received from applicants, tenants, tenant members, Co-operatives and stakeholders of CENSW.

### 3. Exceptions

- 3.1. Requests for responsive, cyclical, or planned maintenance are generally not captured under this policy unless the complaint is regarding a contractor or staff member's service delivery or the quality of the work completed. Refer to the Handling Responsive Maintenance Requests Policy and the Asset Management Policy.
- 3.2. Complaints about a Co-op's service delivery must be addressed under the individual Housing Co-op Complaint's Policy. If a Co-op has not adopted a Complaints Policy, they can refer to the model Complaints Policy provided by CENSW. Whilst not obligated to do so, Co-ops are encouraged to advise CENSW of any complaints received, as learnings can shape future service delivery of the co-op, CENSW and the Sector.
- 3.3. At CENSW, all complaints from staff regarding other staff, supervisors, or Board members and, complaints from Board members about staff or other Board

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members, are deemed to be grievances and are covered in the CENSW Grievance Policy.

### 4. Definitions

**4.1. CENSW** – Common Equity NSW Ltd

**4.2. Complaint** – expression of dissatisfaction made to an organisation, related to its products (services), or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected

**4.3. Customer**- an applicant, tenant, tenant member, Co-operatives or stakeholders of CENSW.

**4.4. Complainant** – the customer who makes the complaint.

**4.5. Co-op/ Housing Co-operative** - refers to the Board of a Housing Co-operative that manages housing on behalf of CENSW. The Co-operative is the Landlord and has the direct relationship with the Tenant.

**4.6. Sector**- Co-operative Housing sector

### 5. Responsibilities

#### 5.1. Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

5.1.1. Providing resources

5.1.2. Oversight of process

5.1.3. Creating an environment that encourages all feedback

5.1.4. Creating a culture of service improvement

#### 5.2. Manager

5.2.1. Investigating and responding to complaints

5.2.2. Implementation of policy and training

5.2.3. Implementation of service improvement strategies

#### 5.3. Staff

5.3.1. Adhering to the policy

5.3.2. Promoting complaints process and documenting verbal complaints

#### 5.4. Complaints Officer

5.4.1. Management of the feedback process

5.4.2. Updating feedback register

5.4.3. Acknowledgement of complaints

5.4.4. Co-ordination of the investigation and response functions

5.4.5. Recommendations for service improvement opportunities

### 6. Procedure

#### 6.1. Lodging a complaint

6.1.1. A customer can make a complaint through

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- Email – [feedback@commonequity.com.au](mailto:feedback@commonequity.com.au)
- Phone – 1800 066 834
- [CENSW Online Complaint Form](#)
- Downloading a soft copy of a Complaint Form from our website - [www.commonequity.com.au](http://www.commonequity.com.au)

### 6.2. Complaint Process

- 6.2.1. The complaint will remain confidential and will be investigated by a Manager. If a Manager is the subject of the complaint, the investigation will be undertaken by the Operations Manager or CEO.
- 6.2.2. The complainant will receive a receipt of acknowledgement within 3 working days of lodging a complaint with CENSW, with the name and the contact details of the Manager leading the investigation, who will be the point of contact for the complainant.
- 6.2.3. The complainant may be contacted for an interview, and will be kept informed of progress, including any delays in a resolution.
- 6.2.4. CENSW aims to formally respond to a complaint within 20 working days.

### 6.3. Alternative avenues for Complaint

- 6.3.1. Lodging a complaint with CENSW does not preclude a customer seeking support or accessing other avenues for complaint. This may include to seek support or advice from:
  - a. Tenant Advice and Advocacy Services. A list of local Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Services can be found at <https://beta.tenants.org.au>
  - b. Community Legal Centres via [www.clcnsw.org.au](http://www.clcnsw.org.au) or on 02 9212 7333
  - c. NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) if it is believed that CENSW has breached the Residential Tenancy Agreement [www.ncat.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au) or on 1300 006 228
  - d. Making a complaint to the Registrar of Community Housing. The Registrar can investigate complaints made about our performance against the National Regulatory Code, and contacted via [www.rch.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rch.nsw.gov.au) [registrar@facs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:registrar@facs.nsw.gov.au) or on 1800 330 940
  - e. Seeking support from a local Member of Parliament. A list of local Members of Parliament can be found at [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members)
  - f. NSW Ombudsman. The Ombudsman can handle inquiries and

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complaints about a range of human service agencies, and can be contacted via [nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au) [www.ombo.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au) or on 02 9286 1000

- g. Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW (ADB) can investigate complaints about the types of discrimination covered by the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act. The ABD can be contacted via [complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au) [www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au) or on 13 77 88
- h. Community Housing Industry Association NSW (CHIA NSW) for any breach of the Code of Practice complaints that are not able to be resolved through Common Equity's complaints process via [nswfha@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:nswfha@communityhousing.org.au) [www.communityhousing.org.au](http://www.communityhousing.org.au) or on 02 9281 7144

### 7. Data Collection

7.1. Common Equity will keep and maintain appropriate records of all complaints received. This includes:

- Information about the complaint
- Any action taken to remediate or resolve the complaint
- The outcome of any action taken
- All records will be kept for 7 years from the date the record was made.

### 8. External References

- 8.1. ISO 10002:2004- Customer satisfaction - Guidelines for complaints handling in organizations- Council of Standards Australia
- 8.2. NDIS Complaints Management and Resolution Rules 2018
- 8.3. NSW Ombudsman
- 8.4. Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act
- 8.5. Disability Inclusion Act
- 8.6. Anti-Discrimination Act
- 8.7. Privacy Act 2012.

### 9. Internal Associated Documents

- 9.1. Grievance Policy
- 9.2. Complaints Register
- 9.3. CENSW Complaints Management Flow Chart.
- 9.4. Handling Responsive Maintenance Requests Policy
- 9.5. Asset Management Policy

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### 10. Forms

#### 10.1. Complaints Form

<b>March 2021 Amendments</b>	Inclusion of <a href="mailto:feedback@commonequity.com.au">feedback@commonequity.com.au</a> Link to online form Reorganisation of sequence to match our current policies New template Simplified language
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<b>Name, Designation and Signature of Approver</b>	Nick Sabel, CEO
<b>Contact/Responsible Delegation</b>	Senior Project Manager
<b>Date</b>	8 March 2021
<b>Date Committee/Board Approved</b>	N/A
<b>Date Staff Informed</b>	
<b>Upload to Website and Date</b>	n/a
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