

COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Approved by Management Committee: December 2017

Responsible for Implementation: Director & Management Committee

Date of Review: December 2020

Policy Statement

Causeway Irish Housing Association employs staff to provide a housing management service and to run the organisation. The staff are accountable to a voluntary Management Committee, which meets approximately every six weeks.

The properties in which tenants live are owned by a number of partner housing associations and private landlords. As managers of these properties, Causeway is responsible for providing most of the services to tenants.

A complaint relating to a service provided by another housing association (not Causeway) is not part of this policy. Causeway will, where possible and appropriate, assist tenants in pursuing these complaints.

Causeway aims to provide tenants and potential tenants with a quality service, which is accountable to them. Should tenants find the service unsatisfactory, they may make a formal complaint.

When dealing with any complaint our aim is to ensure that we:

- deal quickly and politely with all complaints;
- investigate fully and effectively the grounds for complaint;
- keep the complainant informed of progress in dealing with their complaint;
- put matters right wherever necessary and within the shortest possible time;
- to learn from complaints and change our practices or procedures to meet the needs of our tenants.

1. What constitutes a complaint?

The Complaints Procedure cannot be used to complain about the Association's policies. Policies are decided by Causeway's Management Committee (on which 2 seats are reserved for tenant members). If you wish to comment on any of the Association's policies, please contact the Director or a Tenant Member who will take your views forward for discussion at Committee.

You may complain if a policy has been unfairly operated in your case. For example, you can complain if you believe that:

- you have been unfairly refused housing
- you have been offered unsuitable housing (and no other offer has been made)
- you have been treated unfairly
- you have made a complaint but received no response
- your repairs have not been completed in accordance with policy
- your application to transfer has not been fairly dealt with
- our staff have been unhelpful or rude

Complaints do **not** include:

- reporting a repair for the first time
- reporting a problem with your neighbour
- disputing action over rent arrears – there is a separate legal procedure for this

Please note that we are committed to getting things right for tenants and we urge you to discuss the issue with us informally before you consider the formal complaints procedure so that we can take the necessary action.

If you feel that Causeway has failed to meet its obligations as a landlord, you should consult a solicitor or go to a Citizens Advice Bureau or law centre.

2. How to make a complaint

The following procedures should be observed when making a complaint against staff, or any aspect of the service provided by, or in the control of Causeway.

If you are unhappy with any issue, you should in the first instance try to resolve it with your housing manager or the member of staff with whom you disagree, either in writing or by telephone. A member of staff may telephone you or arrange to meet you to discuss the matter.

During this time you will receive a copy of the complaints procedure.

Stage 1

If the matter cannot be resolved informally you should write to the Director at our address at:

Causeway Irish Housing Association
Haringey Irish Community Centre
Pretoria Road
London N17 8DX

Your complaint should detail;

- what you are unhappy with
- what you have done to deal with the problem
- what you would like us to do

All complaints are recorded and monitored.

You will receive a reply within 20 working days with a proposed solution or action. If you are not satisfied with the Director's response you should take the matter to Stage 2.

Stage 2

You should write to the Chair of the Management Committee at the above address within 28 days. The Chair will discuss your complaint with the Management Committee. Depending on the nature of your complaint, the Chair and other members of the Management Committee may choose to interview you to hear your case. You will receive a written report from the Chair with a proposed solution and action within 3 months of receiving your complaint. The Chair's decision is final, unless you take your complaint outside the organisation.

If you wish to do this and your tenancy is with Causeway (or An Teach) you should proceed to Stage 3.

Stage 2a

If you have a tenancy agreement with a Housing Association other than Causeway e.g. Circle 33, you may then use their complaint procedure as outlined in the tenancy agreement.

Stage 3

If you are still unhappy with the outcome and still want to take the matter further, you should complain to:

Housing Ombudsman Service

