



# United Communities

## Customer Feedback Policy

(For Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions)

### 1 Our Statement

United Communities will always strive to provide high quality customer focused service in all our work. However we recognise that we may not always get everything right, therefore we will encourage our customers to let us know when this happens in order for us to have the opportunity to put things right. We recognise the benefits of listening to our customers, this gives us an opportunity to learn from their experiences and improve the way we do things.

We value feedback about all our services whether it is a complaint, compliment or a suggestion. This Policy Applies to all members of staff, contractors or agents acting on our behalf. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility and is accountable for the effective delivery of the policy.

### 2 Definition of a complaint

United Communities defines a 'complaint' as a expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of delivery or non-delivery of a service, when the service is provided by us or a person or body acting on our behalf. So, for example, complaints about anti-social behaviour by another tenant or about services provided by another agency are not covered by this policy. Disputes solely about the amount of compensation payable are not dealt with under this policy.

### 3 What we promise

- Listen carefully to customers. Taking complaints, compliments and suggestions seriously, recording the details.
- Respond in a customer's preferred way, and tailor our response to accommodate specific communication requirements, needs and preferences.
- Use plain language when we communicate.
- Keep our customers informed of progress and regularly updated throughout the management of the complaint. Deal with all complaints, compliments and suggestions at the point they are received. Our staff are empowered to make decisions, undertake investigations and discuss with other colleagues to help resolve the complaint quickly.



- Apologise where necessary, learning from mistakes and seek to minimise mistakes happening in the future.
- When we receive a compliment, we recognise the staff mentioned and thank them.
- When we receive a suggestion, we will thank the customer; properly consider it and feedback the outcome to the customer.
- We will confirm receipt of your Feedback by the end of the next working day, and try to respond to you with an outcome within 8 days. Sometimes this will take longer depending on individual cases.

#### 4 Our three stage resolution process:

1. **The first stage** – Resolution First: encourages greater investigation and understanding and an effective dialogue between staff and customer in an attempt to resolve customer issues at the earliest opportunity.
2. **The second stage** –Management Review: to review the facts so far, determine action and engage the customer to work toward a solution that they are satisfied with.
3. **The third stage** – Customer Feedback Panel Review: the customer can escalate the complaint after the management review stage to a Resident’s Complaints Panel, which shall comprise of at least two residents, a Board member, and/or the CEO.

#### 5 Unreasonable or vexatious complainants

We may decide to refuse to respond to customers who behave unreasonably (such as being aggressive or being abusive or making unreasonable demands or being unreasonably persistent) when making a complaint.

We consider people are making vexatious complaints when they:

- Make repeated complaints on similar issues that have been previously considered.
- Fail to engage in the complaint process.
- Make unreasonable demands upon staff in terms of what is demanded or the number of letters/e-mails/phone calls made that may result in excessive drain on staff time.

The Chief Executive will determine if a complaint is considered vexatious. The way in which we will then deal with the case will be considered on a case by case basis. We will write to the customer and explain that this is the case and the action we will take.



## 6 Equality and Diversity

United Communities will abide by all the legal requirements relating to equality and diversity, however, we do not want to just meet the basic legal criteria. We make equality and diversity an integral part of our business.

## 7 GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

As registered providers of social housing, United Communities recognises the importance of sensitive and lawful handling of data which is in line with the rights and expectations of our customers, suppliers and other stakeholders.

## 8 Monitoring and Reporting

A report will be provided at least annually to the Board exploring complaints trends, details of compensation agreed and a summary of the outcomes and changes implemented as a result of complaints received.

We will:

- use complaints to guide service improvement where appropriate.
- monitor and review complaints, reporting our performance in dealing with complaints to our customers and our Board.
- train our staff to deal with complaints efficiently and effectively.
- allocate the appropriate level of resources to ensure complaints can be dealt with quickly.
- involve customers in any review and continuous improvement of the complaints service to ensure it is fit for purpose, objective and outcome focused.
- use focus groups and external research companies to improve the service provided.

This Policy is due for review in 2020. The effectiveness of this Policy will be constantly monitored and may be updated before this date or should there be any changes to relevant legislation or statutory guidelines.