

Complaints policy

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Introduction

Brentwood Housing Trust will always try and provide you with the best service we can. Sometimes though, things can go wrong and if they do, we want to ensure that they are resolved as quickly as possible in a courteous, fair and consistent manner.

We take complaints seriously as they help us learn and enable us to improve our services. If something is not quite right, please tell us so we can look into it and try to resolve it. We need to know why you are dissatisfied and how you think we can put things right.

We define a complaint as:

an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'

This policy explains how to make a complaint and how we will investigate it. It outlines what we can and can't investigate and what to do if you are not happy with our response.

When we respond to your complaint, we will:

- address the issues raised and the outcome of the investigation or review
- say what we have done to address the matter (if the Trust is found to be at fault)
- give a clear outcome as to whether we uphold the complaint
- provide details of what you should do if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint

If your complaint is upheld, we will:

- apologise for the failure in service
- explain what went wrong
- say what we have done to put things right
- where appropriate, say how we have learnt from the complaint

How to complain

We have a two-stage process to ensure that all complaints are investigated thoroughly. All complaints should be made to Brentwood Housing Trust. This can be done through our website www.brentwoodhousingtrust.co.uk -contact us, by email enquiries@brentwoodhousingtrust.co.uk phone 01277 225084 , by letter or by calling in person.

We will help customers make their complaint through one of the methods described above and progress through the stages if required.

If your complaint is something we can't investigate, then we will tell you. You can see examples at the end of this policy.

Regardless of the point of access, any complaints will be dealt with at the lowest stage possible unless there is good reason to escalate it to the next stage.

Stage one – Housing Manager

If you are unhappy with any service you have received from Brentwood Housing Trust (BHT), you should complain to BHT who will pass your complaint to the Housing Manager. They have the authority to resolve most problems.

You will need to tell us what is wrong and what you think can be done to put it right.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, give you a reference number, tell when you can expect a full reply and who is dealing with the complaint.

You should get a full response within a maximum of 10 working days. If for any reason this is not possible, we will tell you.

Stage two – Chief Executive

If within 28 days you are unhappy with the response at stage one, you should contact BHT to start the second and final stage of the process. Your complaint will be passed to the Chief Executive who will review the response given and outline their findings to you.

You will need to tell us what is wrong, why the response you received to the stage one complaint didn't resolve the issue and what you think can be done to put it right.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, give you a reference number, tell when you can expect a full reply.

You should get a full response within a maximum of 20 working days. If for any reason this is not possible, we will tell you.

Further help

If you would like someone to help with your complaint or to speak on your behalf at an appeal, we can give you details of organisations that can help you.

If you have exhausted our process and you remain dissatisfied, you can approach the Housing Ombudsman. They would expect people contacting them to have made use of the Trust's two stage complaints process first. We will advise you how to do this when we reply to you.

Unreasonable complaint behaviour

We aim to deal with complaints fairly and in line with our complaints policy. Occasionally, some individuals demonstrate unreasonable behaviour (thoughtless or persistent complaints or complaints made in a threatening way).

We define unreasonable complainant behaviour as those who, because of the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Trust, hinder its consideration of their or other people's complaints.

Our unacceptable behaviour policy sets out how we deal with this.

Useful contact details

Brentwood Housing Trust

Phone: 01277 225084

Housing Ombudsman

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Complaints we can investigate

Some examples of complaints we can investigate include:

- unreasonable delays providing a service or not providing it at all
- providing a poor or substandard service
- failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities
- inappropriate conduct of our staff or contractors
- providing false or inaccurate information

Complaints we cannot investigate

Some examples of complaints we cannot investigate include:

- the initial reporting of a problem that could be resolved if we are made aware of it - this includes things such as dumped rubbish, or a repair needed in the communal area.
- complaints that involve matters that would usually be investigated by the police, such as:
 - o allegations of theft, racial or sexual harassment or abuse
 - o incidents or allegations of hate crime
 - o incidents where the matters being complained about have already been investigated by the police
- when the issue happened over 12 months before you reported it or complained about it

The above lists are not exhaustive and if for any reason we cannot investigate a complaint, we will tell you why and what to do next.

This version of the policy was published in January 2025 and will be fully reviewed every 2 years.
The next full review will be in January 2027.