

Complaints Resolution & Customer Care Policy

Operating area:	IDS		
Approved by:	Board		
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Author & responsible officer:	Operations Director		
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Audience:	Customers of IDS		
Supersedes:	Complaints Resolution & Customer Care Policy 2018		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Industrial Dwellings Society (IDS) aims to give an excellent customer experience. We will listen, explain what can and cannot be done and do what we say we will. If we do not meet our service standards we will apologise, accept responsibility, put things right when they are under our control and listen to improve what we do or influence.
- 1.2 IDS recognises and supports the need to deal with all complaints promptly, thoroughly and in an even-handed manner. Complaints present an opportunity for continuous improvement and will be welcomed.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy relates to existing customers, potential or former customers of IDS who have left a property less than one month previously. It does not cover staff employed by IDS.
- 2.2 Enquiries on behalf of residents made by Councillors and MPs will be treated as correspondence (not formal complaints) and be responded to within ten working days.
- 2.3 Compensation requests will be dealt with through our Compensation Policy

3. What is a complaint?

- 3.1 A complaint is defined as:

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

4. What is not considered as a complaint?

4.1 This policy does not cover a request for service under the normal tenant and landlord relationship. This includes 'complaints' about other residents which can be addressed under other policies.

4.2 IDS will not consider a complaint anything that:

- happened more than 6 months ago
- Is already in the complaints system or has been previously and was not upheld
- Is being considered through another complaint or appeals process
- is about compliance with a policy, law or regulation
- is an insurance claim
- is, or has been, subject to legal, court, tribunal or Ombudsman proceedings
- is made anonymously

4.3 In certain circumstances, for example where a customer is unreasonable or is verbally abusive to staff, we reserve the right to refuse to deal with complaints or deal with them differently.

4.4 If IDS decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process.

5. **How can a complaint be made**

5.1 Ideally we would like to hear complaints in the customers own words, so we welcome complaints in whichever way the customer feels most comfortable via letter, email, online form or in person. If customers prefer, we are happy that complaints are reported via our staff who will then note the content of the complaint. We will also accept complaints from a third party or representative where consent has been provided.

6. **Stages of the complaints process and time frames**

6.1 *Acknowledgement*

When we receive a complaint, this will be logged and acknowledged within 3 working days and appoint a lead officer to carry out the investigation.

6.2 *Stage 1*

The customer will receive a full response and outcome within 10 working days. If the complaint cannot be resolved within this time frame, we will write to the customer explaining that their complaint is being investigated further and agree a suitable time frame with the customer. This should not generally exceed a further 10 working days.

We will write to confirm our response and agreed actions concluding stage 1 of the process. If we receive no response from the customer within 21 working days, we will close the complaint.

6.3 *Stage 2*

If the customer is unhappy with our decision, they can ask within 21 working days for the complaint to be reviewed at stage 2. The customer will need to explain why they remain dissatisfied and what remedy they are seeking.

A member of the Corporate Management Team will review the complaint and stage 1 response. We will respond within 10 working days, or longer if agreed by the customer as outlined in stage 1 above, outlining our proposed resolution and conclusion to the complaint.

6.4 This concludes the IDS internal complaints process.

7. Housing Ombudsman

7.1 Any customer who has been through the complaints process but remains unsatisfied with the outcome is able to raise their complaint with the Housing Ombudsman who can independently review the complaint. The Housing Ombudsman website has full details <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

7.2 We shall cooperate with the Ombudsman's requests for evidence and provide this within 15 working days. If a response cannot be provided within this timeframe, we shall provide the Ombudsman with an explanation for the delay

8. Feedback and monitoring

8.1 We will gather feedback from customers following the closure of a complaint as this information helps us improve how we provide services and respond to complaints.

8.2 Complaints will be reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and the Housing Committee with consideration being given on how these might contribute toward the Association's continuous improvement approach to service delivery.

8.3 The Board will be provided with an annual summary of complaints activity and how they have contributed to service improvement. The outcomes will also be shared with residents in an appropriate form.

8.4 We will publish and review annually the process for dealing with complaints along with these associated timescales.

9. Policy Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or sooner if they no longer reflect best practice or legislative or regulatory requirements.

10. Related policies and procedures

Complaints resolution procedure
Compensation Policy