

Complaints Resolution & Customer Care Policy

Operating area:		IDS	
Approved by:		Board	
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Supersedes:	Complaints Resolution and 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, as such, will be welcomed.
- 1.3 We take full regard of the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments and Regulator of Social Housing's published Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard paragraph 2.1.2 and shall:
 - *offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint*
 - *set out clear service standards for responding to complaints, including complaints about performance against the standards, and details of what to do if they are unhappy with the outcome of a complaint*
 - *inform tenants how we use complaints to improve their services and publish information about complaints each year, including their number and nature, and the outcome of the complaints*
 - *Make reasonable adjustments to hear complaints made by all residents as well as advocates authorised to act on behalf of a tenant/s*

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy relates to existing customers, potential or former customers of IDS who have left a property no more than six months previously. If there is a reasonable explanation for the delay in raising the complaint from a former customer, it may still be considered.
- 2.2 Enquiring 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.

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 requests under the normal landlord and tenant relationship. This includes 'complaints' about other residents which can be addressed under other policies.

4.2 Each complaint request will be considered on its own set of circumstances, however IDS generally will not consider as a complaint anything that:

- happened more than 6 months ago or the request to escalate has passed the deadline and there is no reasonable reason to justify extending it
- Is already in the complaints system or has been previously and was not upheld
- Is being considered through another complaint or appeals process
- Is being or has been dealt with through legal action or an insurance or liability 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 deal with them differently, such as providing a single point of contact or limiting communication channels to a defined email address.

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. If the customer is not satisfied with this decision, they are able to contact the Ombudsman for their review.

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 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 from the date the complaints is logged. If the complaint cannot be resolved within this time frame, we will write to the customer explaining that their complaint is being investigated further. This should not generally exceed a further 10 working days. Should more than an additional 10 working days be required, this will be agreed with the customer. If an agreed time frame cannot be reached, IDS will provide the customer with the Housing Ombudsman's contact details in order to challenge the timeliness of the response.

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.

IDS will not unreasonably refuse to escalate a complaints. Any refusal to escalate will be explained to the customer in writing

A member of the Corporate Management Team will review the complaint and stage 1 response. We will respond within 20 working days, or longer as outlined in stage 1 above with agreement from the customer if this expands a further 10 working days, outlining our proposed resolution and conclusion to the complaint.

6.3 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 the 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 time frame, 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 Operations 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 it no longer reflects best practice or legislative or regulatory requirements.

10. Related policies and procedures

Complaints resolution procedure
Compensation Policy