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Area:	Organisational/18
Subject:	Complaints
Updated:	Jan 2022
Trustee Approval:	Aug 2019
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➤ Purpose

At St Martins we want to be the best organisation we can be. We recognise that sometimes we make mistakes but we are open to receiving information which will help us to redress any mistakes we make and improve the service we deliver. We will always do our best to resolve complaints.

This policy is for use by people who use our services, volunteers, neighbours and stakeholders. It is not for employee use. Any employee with a complaint should use the Grievance Procedure.

➤ What we will do

We encourage any person seeking to make a complaint to make every effort to resolve this informally in the first instance. However, if this is not possible we will investigate any formal complaint as follows:

Stage 1

Any person wishing to make a complaint about the service delivered by St Martins should complete the relevant form (see Appendix A, a copy of which must be given to the CEO or the Director of Finance in the absence of the CEO). Where a complaint is made in person or by telephone the person taking the complaint will write it down and send/give a copy to the complainant. The complaint will be dealt with by the Director concerned who has five working days to attempt to resolve the complaint. If the complaint has not been resolved within five working days, the Director must inform the complainant of the reason for delay, and pass the complaint to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, the complaint moves to Stage 2 of the procedure.

Stage 2

The CEO will review the complaint, the investigation and the action taken to date. Recommendations will be made for resolving the complaint and will be put in writing to the complainant within five working days of receiving the file, advising him or her of the recommendation. If the complainant is not satisfied with the suggested outcome, the complaint moves to Stage 3.

Stage 3

The CEO will advise the Chair or Vice-Chair of Trustees and he/she will appoint two Trustees to form a Panel at the earliest opportunity. The CEO will make arrangements for the Panel Hearing and advise the complainant accordingly, giving at least 10 working days' notice of the time, date and location.

The CEO will submit a written report about the complaint to the Panel detailing the background to the complaint, including his/her opinion why his/her proposals for resolving the complaint at Stage 2 of the process had not been successful. This report will also be sent to the complainant at least 5 days before the Panel Hearing.

At the Panel Hearing the complainant will be given an opportunity to explain his or her complaint and why they feel it had not been resolved at the earlier stages of the process. They may be accompanied by a friend if they wish, who may (if they wish) speak on their behalf – but not to answer questions on behalf of the complainant.

The Chair of the Panel will notify the complainant in writing of the outcome within 10 working days of the meeting and the reasons for the Panel's decision.

If the complainant is a resident of St Martins he or she will be advised that, if they remain unsatisfied about their complaint they may contact the Care Quality Commission (Highwater House and Webster Court only).

If a resident is not satisfied with the investigation or outcome of their complaint they have a right to complain to the Independent Housing Ombudsman (this applies to Bishopbridge House, Dibden Road Hostel and community houses only)

In the case of service users of St Martins who have a complaint but who are not residents of St Martins Stage 3 is the final stage.

St Martins reserves the right not to investigate any anonymous complaints.

We will always do our best to put things right if a complaint is upheld.

The Trustees of St Martins will review all complaints received and actions taken annually.



➤ Useful Information

Care Quality Commission

Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Tel: 03000 616161

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>



➤ Appendix A

COMPLAINT FORM

St Martins Housing Trust

Statement of complainant:
(Continue on a separate sheet if required)

Third party or witness name and signature:

Complainant's name and signature:

Complainant's contact details

Date:

Complaint received by telephone / in person / by post / (please circle)

Staff name:

Staff signature:

Date received:



Versions

Version	Changes	Date Changes made	Who signed off
1.1	New format	Sept 19	CB
1.2	Stage 1 updated	Jan 2022	JS
1.3	Updated website for Ombudsman	Jan 2023	JS

Associated Policies

Grievance Procedure