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| Area: | Organisational/18 |
| Subject: | Complaints |
| Updated: | Jan 2025 |
| Trustee Approval: | Feb 2024 |
| Review Date: | Jan 2028 |

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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 team member's use. Any team member 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 should complete the relevant form (see Appendix A), a copy of which must be given to the CEO or the Director of Operations (Internal) in the absence of the CEO, or if the complaint is about 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. Every effort will be made to respond to the complaint within five working days, if this is not possible the complainant will be advised.

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

Stage 2

The CEO / Director of Operations (Internal) 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 / Director of Operations 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 / Director of Operations 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 / Director of Operation (Internal) 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 (but not a legal representative), 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.



Complaints

Any complaint that is a crime needs to be reported to the police (see link below)-

[Hate-crime-report-accessible.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



➤ 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)

Team Member name:

Team Member 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 |
| 1.4 | Updated to include hate crime | Nov 2023 | AH/MB |
| 1.5 | Updated to include Director of operations (internal) | Jan 2025 | JGW/JS |

Associated Policies

Grievance Procedure