



Resident Complaints and Feedback Procedure

August 2026

1. Introduction

YMCA Lincolnshire is committed to providing high-quality housing and support services. We recognise that complaints provide valuable feedback and an opportunity to improve services, resolve concerns fairly and rebuild trust where things have gone wrong.

This procedure explains how residents and their representatives can raise complaints and how YMCA Lincolnshire will investigate and respond to them in line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

We are committed to:

- Treating complaints seriously, fairly and respectfully
- Resolving complaints promptly and effectively
- Communicating clearly and transparently
- Learning from complaints to improve services
- Making the complaints process accessible to all residents

Complaints will always be viewed positively as an opportunity to improve service delivery and resident experience.

2. Purpose and Scope

This procedure sets out how YMCA Lincolnshire will:

- Receive and acknowledge complaints
- Investigate concerns fairly and independently
- Respond within clear timescales
- Put things right where service failures have occurred
- Learn from complaints to improve services

This procedure applies to complaints relating to YMCA Lincolnshire housing services, staff, contractors and anyone acting on behalf of YMCA Lincolnshire.

3. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by YMCA Lincolnshire, its staff, contractors, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

Examples may include concerns relating to:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Tenancy management
- Anti-social behaviour handling
- Staff conduct
- Communication failures
- Delays in service delivery
- Complaint handling

A complaint may be made verbally, in writing, by email, telephone, or through a representative acting on behalf of a resident.

4. Service Requests

A service request is different from a complaint.

A service request is a request for YMCA Lincolnshire to provide a service or put something right.

Examples:

Service Request:

"My shower is not getting hot."

Complaint:

"I reported my shower was not getting hot two weeks ago and nobody has repaired it."

Service requests will be recorded and actioned in line with operational priorities and available resources.

If a resident expresses dissatisfaction with the response to a service request, the matter will be treated as a complaint. Residents will not be required to repeatedly raise the same issue before it is accepted as a complaint.

YMCA Lincolnshire will continue to address service requests while any associated complaint is being investigated.

5. Who Can Make a Complaint?

Complaints may be made by:

- Current residents
- Former residents, where the issue occurred within the previous 12 months
- Representatives or advocates acting on behalf of a resident
- Next of kin of a deceased resident, where appropriate

Where a representative acts on behalf of a resident, the complaint will be handled in the same way as if it had been made directly by the resident.

From this point onward, the term "complainant" refers to either the resident or their representative.

YMCA Lincolnshire may exercise discretion to accept complaints outside the 12-month timeframe where there is a good reason to do so.

6. What Is Not Considered a Complaint?

The following matters will not normally be handled under this procedure:

- Appeals against housing allocation or eviction decisions
- Complaints of anti-social behaviour made against another resident
- Employee grievances
- Safeguarding concerns
- Whistleblowing disclosures
- Matters subject to active legal proceedings
- Complaints previously considered under this procedure

These matters will instead be managed under the relevant YMCA Lincolnshire policy or procedure.

Complaints submitted through surveys will not normally be treated as formal complaints. However, residents will be advised how to access the complaints procedure separately.

Complaints made by external organisations will be handled under the wider YMCA Lincolnshire Complaints Procedure.

7. When a Complaint Will Not Be Considered

Where a complaint is not accepted under this procedure, YMCA Lincolnshire will provide a written explanation outlining:

- Why the complaint is not being considered
- Any alternative process available
- The complainant's right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service if they disagree with the decision

Each complaint will be considered on its individual merits.

8. How to Make a Complaint

Complaints can be made:

- In person
- By telephone
- By email
- In writing
- Through a representative or advocate

The complainant should provide:

- Their name and contact details
- Details of the complaint
- The impact the issue has had on them

- Their preferred outcome or resolution

Reasonable adjustments and support will be offered where required.

9. Complaint Handling Principles

All complaints will be handled by an appropriately senior member of staff who has the authority to investigate the complaint and make decisions where necessary.

YMCA Lincolnshire will ensure complaints are handled fairly by:

- Considering each complaint on its own merits
- Reviewing all relevant evidence
- Communicating respectfully and clearly
- Giving complainants an opportunity to explain their concerns
- Taking steps to address any actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Keeping accurate records throughout the process

10. Stage 1 Complaint Process

Stage 1 complaints will normally be investigated by the relevant Service Manager.

Acknowledgement

Complaints will be acknowledged and logged within 5 working days of receipt.

The acknowledgement will confirm:

- The issues being investigated
- Any issues not being investigated and the reasons why
- The complaint stage
- Expected response timescales

Investigation and Response

The complaint will be investigated fairly and thoroughly.

A Stage 1 response will normally be issued within 10 working days of the acknowledgement.

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed:

- Why the extension is needed
- The revised timescale
- Their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service

Extensions will not normally exceed an additional 10 working days unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 1 Response

Responses will be written in clear and plain language and alternative formats, including Braille, translation, or other accessible formats, will be provided where required.

The response will include:

- The complaint stage
- The complaint definition
- The decision reached
- Reasons for the decision
- Details of any remedy or action
- Timescales for outstanding actions
- Information on how to escalate the complaint to Stage 2

11. Stage 2 Complaint Process

If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request escalation to Stage 2 within 28 calendar days of the Stage 1 response.

The complainant does not need to explain why they remain dissatisfied in order to escalate the complaint.

Stage 2 complaints will normally be investigated by the Director of Housing or another appropriate senior manager not previously involved in the complaint.

Acknowledgement

The Stage 2 complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

Investigation and Response

A full Stage 2 response will normally be issued within 20 working days of the acknowledgement.

Where additional time is required, the complainant will be informed of:

- The reason for the delay
- The revised timescale
- Their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service

Extensions will not normally exceed an additional 20 working days unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Stage 2 Response

The Stage 2 response will include:

- The complaint stage
- The decision reached

- Reasons for the decision
- Details of any remedy offered
- Any outstanding actions and timescales
- Information about the Housing Ombudsman Service

The Stage 2 response represents YMCA Lincolnshire's final response.

12. Housing Ombudsman Service

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the Stage 2 response, they may refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

YMCA Lincolnshire will fully support complainants throughout this process and will cooperate with the Housing Ombudsman where required.

Information about the Housing Ombudsman Service can be found on the YMCA Lincolnshire website.

13. Remedies and Putting Things Right

Where service failures are identified, YMCA Lincolnshire will take appropriate action to put matters right.

Remedies may include:

- Acknowledging mistakes and apologising
- Providing explanations
- Completing outstanding actions
- Correcting records
- Reconsidering decisions
- Providing practical assistance
- Financial compensation where appropriate
- Reviewing policies, procedures, or working practices

Any remedy offered will reflect the impact on the complainant and will include clear actions and timescales.

YMCA Lincolnshire will consider Housing Ombudsman guidance when determining appropriate remedies.

14. Equality and Accessibility

YMCA Lincolnshire is committed to ensuring the complaints process is accessible to all residents.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate, including:

- Translation and interpretation services
- Alternative document formats
- Advocacy support
- Flexible communication methods

- Additional support for residents with disabilities or vulnerabilities

Any disclosed disabilities or communication needs will be recorded and considered throughout the complaints process in line with the Equality Act 2010.

15. Complaint Records and Confidentiality

YMCA Lincolnshire will maintain a full and accurate record of each complaint, including:

- The original complaint
- Correspondence and communications
- Investigation notes
- Evidence reviewed
- Outcomes and actions taken

Residents may request access to complaint information through a Subject Access Request in accordance with data protection legislation.

16. Learning from Complaints

YMCA Lincolnshire is committed to learning from complaints and improving services.

Complaint outcomes and trends will be reviewed regularly to identify opportunities for:

- Service improvements
- Policy and procedure changes
- Staff training and development
- Improved contractor performance
- Better resident experience

Learning from complaints may be shared with senior management, governance groups and relevant teams.

17. Unreasonable or Unacceptable Behaviour

There may occasionally be circumstances where a complainant's behaviour becomes unreasonable, abusive, threatening, or excessively persistent.

Where this occurs, YMCA Lincolnshire may place proportionate restrictions on contact while continuing to consider the complaint fairly.

Any restrictions will:

- Be reasonable and proportionate
- Be clearly explained in writing
- Be reviewed regularly
- Take account of the Equality Act 2010

Any action taken will be managed in line with relevant YMCA Lincolnshire policies and procedures.

18. Monitoring and Review

This procedure will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with:

- The Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
- Relevant legislation
- Good practice guidance
- Organisational learning and service improvement requirements

Complaint performance and learning outcomes may also be reported to senior leadership and governance bodies.

Written by	Reviewed by	Review date	Amendments made	Next review date
Helen Wright	Caroline Killeavy	17.9.2024	None	September 2025
Helen Wright	Helen Wright	13.03.2025	Clarification on timescale for escalation to stage 2 What isn't a complaint made clearer.	March 2026
Helen Wright			Full overview	

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