

Compliments, comments & complaints Policy

1.0 Policy Summary

1.1 This policy details Stonewater's policy and approach to compliments, comments and complaints. It applies to all existing customers, and former customers who have left a property less than one month previously.

2.0 Policy Objectives

- 2.1 Stonewater is committed to providing quality services that meet the needs and priorities of our customers, and recognises the importance of giving customers a voice in shaping these services.
- 2.2 Where we do not meet the needs and priorities of our customers, we will ensure that complaints are resolved quickly, effectively, and that we learn from them to change and improve their services.

3.0 Policy Details

3.1 Compliments and Comments

- 3.1.1 We actively welcome compliments and comments, as they let us know what is working well, and those areas that we need to improve upon.
- 3.1.2 We will accept compliments and comments in any way reported and will publish what we have changed, so that customers know how their views and ideas are helping to change and improve their services.

3.2 Complaints

- 3.2.1 A complaint is defined as: 'An expression of dissatisfaction however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action, by Stonewater, its staff, contractors or suppliers, and we cannot remedy the situation to the customer's satisfaction and the customer wishes to pursue the matter'.
- 3.2.2 Any matter received relating to the following will not be dealt with under this policy if:
 - it is not raised by a resident or recent former resident of Stonewater, or an individual acting on their behalf;
 - It is an initial request for a service;
 - It is referring to a service not provided by Stonewater
 - The event took place more than 6 months prior to the complaint being received. In exceptional circumstances this period can be extended if there are mitigating circumstances that excuse a delay in the reporting of a complaint;
 - It relates to a policy that has been approved by the Board, unless the complaint is about a failure to comply with the policy;
 - It is a complaint about anti social behaviour, unless it relates to how Stonewater has dealt with a case;
 - The complaint has previously been through the complaints process and was not upheld, or the

Customer Complaint Panel declined to consider the complaint;

- The matter is a grievance raised by a member of staff, as this will be dealt with under the relevant personnel procedure;
- It relates to the annual rent increase, unless there has been mistake in the calculation of the increase;
- The complaint has already been recorded and is being acted upon and the customer engages an MP, Councillor or other representative to communicate with Stonewater on the same matter
- It relates to a service charge, unless the service has not been delivered in accordance with the service requirement, or there has been a mistake made in the calculation of a charge.

3.2.3 Where an external appeals process is being pursued e.g. leasehold valuation tribunal, rent assessment committee, or a court of law, the complaint will not be considered or closed and the external process followed rather than this policy. The decision of the external process will be final, and a complaint related to the same issue cannot be lodged again or reopened.

3.2.4 Where a complaint involves a member of staff, the staff member will be interviewed as part of the initial investigation then kept up to date following each stage of the process. Should any action be taken against the member of staff this will be in accordance with the relevant personnel procedure.

3.3 Dealing with complaints effectively

3.3.1 We will deal complaints as quickly and effectively as possible. Should we make a mistake, we will offer an immediate apology and try to put things right. However if the complainant is still not satisfied, we will have a written complaints process for the complainant to follow.

3.4 Complaints and compensation

3.4.1 Any compensation due as a result of a complaint will be assessed in accordance with Stonewater's compensation policy.

3.5 Unreasonable or vexatious complaints

3.5.1 Whilst we are committed to ensuring that our complaints process is accessible, we must also ensure that we do not waste valuable resources dealing with unreasonable or vexatious complaints. In order to deal with such situations Stonewater's unacceptable customer conduct and behaviour policy will be followed.

4.0 Key Outcomes

4.1 All complaints received will be monitored against key milestone dates.

4.2 Complaint root cause analysis will be undertaken to identify causes and trends to ensure that we learn from mistakes and improve the services we offer to customers.

4.3 A report detailing the volume of complaints will be presented to Regional Committee's at quarterly intervals, with a more detailed analysis every six months.

5.0 Equality and Diversity

5.1 Stonewater will accept a complaint in any way that it is reported. However, a standard form will be made available for completion by the customer should they choose to use it.

- 5.2 To meet the objective of the designated person role, members of the CCP will not be allowed to be involved in any form of Stonewater governance, or receive any payment from Stonewater, with the exception of one off costs such as travel costs, subsistence etc.
- 5.3 Stonewater will have regard to the special information needs of customers and will make translation and other services accessible as appropriate. Those customers with support needs may make use of a representative, but legal advisors are not permitted.

6.0 Version

| Version | Date | Description |
|---------|------------|---|
| 2.0 | 05.09.2017 | Reviewed by Housing Committee and confirmed as remaining fit for purpose. |