

AIHA COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Document Owner: R Benedikt
Date Approved: 20 March 2023
Review Date: 15 March 2024

AIHA AIMS TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

AIHA | 206 Lordship Road, London N16 5ES | Tel: 020 8802 3819 | reception@aihalt.co.uk

Agudas Israel Housing Association is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 No. LH 3673. A charity registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 No. 23535 R

Policy Statement:

We aim to provide a consistently high standard of service to our customers and stakeholders. Ideally, we try to get things right the first time, however it is recognised that there may be times when users are not satisfied with the service provision. In such a circumstance AIHA encourages customers to contact staff with their complaint so that action can be taken to improve things.

What is a complaint:

A complaint is defined by the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (CHC) as *“an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.”*

What is not a complaint:

The list below are the main exclusions; this list is not exhaustive:

- Service failure that happened over 6 months prior to the complaint being made.
- Matters that have already been considered under the complaints policy.
- Requests for general services or maintenance repairs. Service requests are only treated as a complaint if AIHA has been informed but failed to deal with them.
- Complaints about a service not provided by AIHA.
- Matters already referred to the Housing Ombudsman or when confirmation of a legal action proceeding has been received by AIHA.
- Matters already considered and dealt with by a Court or the Housing Ombudsman.
- Complaints from one resident about another. The residents are advised to contact AIHA's housing management team for advice on such disputes.
- Members of the public inclusive of neighbours are excluded from the complaints' procedure, however AIHA will respond to these correspondences separately.
- Anti-social behaviour will be dealt with separately from complaints policy and such complaints will be handled in a different way. All complaints about anti-social behaviour should be reported to AIHA's Housing Management team.
- Complaints about services, organisations and individuals for which AIHA is not responsible for.
- Anonymous complaints. These will be noted but could not be responded to.

When AIHA decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation will be provided to the resident setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process.

A resident has the right to challenge this decision by bringing their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman (contact details below). Where appropriate the Ombudsman will instruct the landlord to take on the complaint.

How do I make a complaint:

A complaint can be made in person or by an authorised representative. You may contact us with your complaint by phone, e-mail or in writing.

The complainant should be asked for supporting documents where required. The complainant will need to provide their name, address, email (optional) and telephone number when making the complaint.

We will take your preferences into account when communicating with you and we will make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010. Our complaint handlers receive training on the Equality Act 2010 and will be able to deal with such requests.

Residents should specify as much as possible what outcome and remedies they are looking for. The required outcome should be correlating directly to the terms of tenancy agreement as AIHA's responsibility.

How to send us your complaint:

BY POST:

AIHA
206 Lordship Rd
London N16 5ES

EMAIL: reception@aihalt.co.uk

TEL: 020 8802 3819

Getting help to make your complaint:

We understand that you may be unable to, or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend relative or an advocate, if you have given them your written consent to complain on your behalf.

Things to know about when making a complaint:

Confidentiality:

All complaints will be treated confidentially, and identifying details will not be revealed to a third party as far as possible. The information will only be disclosed when necessary, in order to properly investigate the matter.

Unacceptable behaviour during any stage of complaints:

AIHA wishes to respond positively to all complaints and will be monitoring all correspondences and inspection visits. It is important to note that unreasonable behaviour from residents, their family or their representatives will not be tolerated at any stage. The

relevant directorate in AIHA will decide whether the complaints should be closed after such events, and the resident will be informed about the decision in writing thereafter.

The following list are examples of unacceptable behaviour. (This list is not limited to the following examples):

- If this is deliberately repetitious
- Unreasonable demands on staff or unreasonable behaviour towards staff
- Threat of (or use of) physical violence
- Verbal abuse or harassment towards AIHA's staff, or agents

Where such complaints escalate to such a position then AIHA will have no alternative but to protect staff from unacceptable behaviour such as unreasonable persistence or offensive behaviour.

Any restrictions placed on a resident's contact due to unacceptable behaviour should be appropriate to their needs and should demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

What happens when I make a complaint:

Timeframes:

AIHA will log and acknowledge a complaint within five working days from receipt of the complaint form. Jewish Holidays where AIHA office is closed will not be considered working days.

AIHA's complaints procedure includes the following maximum timescales for response:

Stage one

10 working days from receipt of the complaint – if this is not possible, the resident will be informed with an explanation and a date by when the stage one response should be received. This would not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they will have 8 weeks from the date of decision to escalate the complaint to the next stage.

Stage two

20 working days from request to escalate – if this is not possible an explanation and a date when the stage two response should be received. This would not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason.

AIHA Internal Process:

Mediation

We will explore the use of mediation by an external organisation where it is appropriate.

Compensation

We may consider an offer of compensation or good will when we have, through our own actions or inactions, failed to deliver services of an acceptable standard.

Internal escalation and appeals

A resident (or representative) can request that their complaint be escalated to stage 2 if they are dissatisfied with the initial response at stage 1.

There may be rare and exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to immediately escalate a new complaint to the final stage of the internal process. This will be at the Head of Tenant Liaison's discretion.

An officer within AIHA will be assigned as a complaint coordinator in order to ensure all complaints are acknowledged, recorded and responded to within the specified time frames.

The process for responding for general housing:

Stage 1: To be responded and resolved by the Head of Tenant Liaison in consultation with managers of the relevant department.

Stage 2: To be responded and resolved by the CEO in consultation with managers of the relevant department.

The process for responding for care, supported and sheltered homes:

If you are a resident, or representing a resident of a care, supported or sheltered home, please refer to the complaints policy of your facility.

Agency Schemes are required to submit their complaints policy and procedure to be approved by AIHA, or alternatively adapt this policy.

What if I'm still dissatisfied:

If after we have fully investigated, you are still dissatisfied with our decision you will have the choice to have this dealt with by a Beth Din where the Beth Din decision is binding or to proceed directly to the Housing Ombudsman.

Beth Din Hearing

As an organisation serving the Orthodox Jewish Community, AIHA believes this service is providing the complainant with a resource that they strongly believe in. There are choices of

several Beth Din's however, the time delay when a Beth Din convenes is out of AIHA's control. Non-attendance by the complainant in the hearing, for any reason; shall mean the closure of complaint.

Housing Ombudsman Information

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 152

Liverpool

L33 7WQ

Tel: 0300 111 3000

email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Web site: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

Beth Din Information

Complainant will provide details to AIHA of the Beth Din in which they wish to have this dealt with.

Monitoring:

As a member of the Housing Ombudsman scheme, AIHA shall comply with the conditions of membership fully. AIHA will openly publish an annual record of complaints and any resulting service improvements in our resident newsletter.

AIHA will also compile an annual self -assessment as required under the new code.

Dealing with complaints will be reported to The Board quarterly.