

# Corporate Complaints and Feedback Policy

## Appendix 2: Third Party Complaints

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**If any updates are required, please submit to the Customer Services Manager, for inclusion and approval.**

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## **1 Third party complaints**

Where the council has entered in to shared service and partnership arrangements with other organisations to deliver services on its behalf, the council remains ultimately responsible for their actions including complaint handling.

This document sets out the complaints procedure for each of the third parties and summarises when and how the council will get involved.

## **2 Cheltenham Borough Homes**

The councils housing stock is managed by Cheltenham Borough Homes Limited (CBH), an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) that also provides the homeless service. CBH has its own complaints procedure.

### **2.1 CBH Complaint procedure in brief**

CBH considers a complaint to be “an expression of dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by CBH, or with something that CBH or a member of its workforce (including any Agent or Contractor) may or may not have done.”

The CBH complaints procedure consists of three stages:

- Stage 1: Investigation and resolution of the matter within 10 working days;
- Stage 2: The complaint will be reviewed by a Service Manager;
- Stage 3: The Complaints Review Panel (made up of two board members) will consider the complaint.

The full complaints procedure can be found on the CBH website: [complaints procedure](#).

### **2.2 CBH Complaint referral process**

Complaints made to the council about CBH will be referred to CBH. The councils Customer Relations Officer will signpost CBH related complaints to their complaints policy and will forward the complaint to the CBH Customer Relations who are best placed to refer complaints within CBH.

#### **2.2.1 Examples of CBH complaints received by the council**

- Noise complaints from CBH properties;
- CBH tenants experiencing issues with their neighbours;
- CBH tenants reporting property faults;
- CBH tenants with complaints regarding housing options;
- Complaints regarding homelessness support.

Whilst CBH manage their own complaints procedures, the council is ultimately responsibility for third party actions; therefore complaint data is reported to the councils CBH Lead Commissioning Officer.

Where complaints require independent scrutiny of CBH, the Customer Relations Officer will liaise with the Lead Commissioning Officer as to the best course of action. This can involve a joint investigation by the council and CBH.

### **2.3 Ombudsman**

Complaints regarding services provided by CBH can be referred to one of two ombudsman organisations depending on their nature.

### **2.3.1 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO)**

The LG&SCO will look in to complaints regarding housing allocations and homelessness, which is provided by CBH on the council's behalf. As the LG&SCO has no jurisdiction over CBH the council remains the point of contact for ombudsman complaints of this nature.

### **2.3.2 The Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS)**

The HOS look in to complaints about CBH as a landlord, and will liaise directly with CBH. Complaints to the HOS will be included in the complaint reporting to the councils CBH Lead Commissioning Officer.

## **3 The Cheltenham Trust.**

The Cheltenham Trust provides the council's Leisure and Culture services. This is an independent charitable trust, contracted to supply leisure and cultural related services to Cheltenham Borough Council via a management agreement. The Cheltenham Trust operates from the Art Gallery & Museum (The Wilson), Town Hall, Pittville Pump Rooms, Leisure@ Recreation centre and the Prince of Wales Stadium, all of which are buildings owned by the council.

### **3.1 The Cheltenham Trusts complaints procedure**

The Trust has now adopted a corporate approach to customer contact and engagement; the new approach followed a restructure and a shift away from individual venue approach.

A new policy is being drafted to ensure the appropriate system and escalation of any complaints.

This revised policy will need to include escalation to CBC, where appropriate, such as any complaints regarding building/structural matters or areas of the service level agreement that relate directly to customers.

## **4 Ubico Limited.**

Complaints made regarding environmental services delivered by Ubico will be dealt with in line with the council's corporate complaint policy.

### **4.1 Service requests**

Service requests are handled by the council's customer services team. The team are the first point of contact for residents with waste and recycling issues; they provide explanations or reasons for issues and offer a course of action to help solve problems where possible. The customer services team raise work tickets for Ubico to action.

Examples of single service requests:

- missed refuse collection;
- recycling crews failing to return boxes and caddies to the residents properties, neatly.
- litter and graffiti problems;
- grass or hedge cutting requests and issues.

#### **4.1.1 Complaint tickets**

A complaint ticket is raised where supervisory involvement is required, and should be dealt with as a matter of urgency. In most cases, complaint work tickets precede the corporate complaint procedure.

Complaint tickets are usually raised when the quickest way to resolve a residents issue is a phone call from a Ubico supervisor. These can be raised for first time issues or repeat problems, this may depend on the resident.

Examples of complaint tickets:

- damage to property by a refuse lorry;
- local grass cutting standards;
- recycling boxes repeatedly not being returned correctly;
- residents that disagree with reports of contaminated recycling boxes,
- where there have been repeated service requests and the resident has not requested the complaint be raised as a corporate complaint.

Ubico will have or will put systems in place to resolve the issues and prevent corporate complaints. This will be monitored on a monthly basis as part of the contract monitoring process.

#### **4.2 Corporate Complaints**

Where customers remain dissatisfied after customer services have tried to resolve the issue, either at service request level or as a complaint ticket, the matter will be forwarded to customer relations as a corporate complaint.

The timeframe for this happening will depend on the resident, the severity of the issue and the judgement of the customer services team in discussion with the customer relations officer.

#### **4.3 Stage 1 Complaints: Investigation**

Customer Relations will log the complaint and refer it to Ubico to investigate. The Clean Green (Commissioning) team will have oversight of all Ubico related corporate complaints.

Common stage 1 complaints:

- lack of response to service requests;
- continuing missed refuse collections following a complaint ticket.

The majority of complaints can be resolved quickly with remedial actions taken by Ubico. In most of these cases, the stage one complaint response will be by telephone. Ubico will notify Customer Relations so that a confirmation email or letter can be sent closing the complaint.

Whilst there are still actions that can be taken to put the issue right, a complaint may be held at stage 1 in certain circumstances.

Written Stage 1 complaint responses will be quality checked by a member of the Clean Green commissioning team or Customer Relations; complaint responses from third party organisations are speaking with the council's voice and the council must be satisfied with the quality of stage 1 investigations and responses.

All complaints and comments regarding staff actions and behaviour are referred directly to Ubico to deal with internally. However, while Ubico staff carry out duties on behalf of the council, the council ultimately remains responsible for their actions.

#### **4.4 Stage 2 Complaints: Review**

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied, the complaint will be referred to the Environmental Partnerships Manager (the lead commissioning officer) for review.

Examples of when this might happen:

- lack of response to stage 1 complaints;
- the measures that the Ubico Supervisor put in place have not resolved the issue;
- a customer continues to express dissatisfaction with the complaint handling.

Monitoring areas of repeat complaint occurrences will highlight where systems do not work.

##### **4.4.1 Stage 2 Director Oversight**

In line with the councils complaints procedure stage 2 responses must have director oversight before a complainant is signposted to the LG&SCO.

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