

## **Stage 1 - Internal Investigation**

At Stage 1, the complaint will be investigated by the relevant Service Manager, who will liaise with the officers and contractors for the service. We aim to acknowledge a Stage 1 complaint within two working days of receipt and to provide a written response within 10 working days.

## **Stage 2 - Independent Investigation**

If you remain dissatisfied following receipt of the Stage 1 response, you can ask for your complaint to be progressed to a review at Stage 2 of the statutory procedure. A request for a Stage 2 review should be made within 20 working days from receipt of the Stage 1 response. We expect you to explain why the initial Stage 1 response has not resolved your complaint and what outcome you require as a resolution to your complaint. We aim to acknowledge a Stage 2 complaint within two working days of receipt.

A Stage 2 investigation is conducted by an Investigating Officer (IO) and an Independent Person (IP) who oversees the fairness and transparency of the investigation process. The IO and IP will look into the complaint and produce a report, following their investigation, which will make findings and identify any recommendations to resolve the complaint. After considering the findings and recommendations of the investigation team, a Senior Manager will provide a written response to the complainant setting out the findings and conclusions. The timescale for responding to a Stage 2 complaint is between 25 and 65 working days, depending on the complexity of the complaint.

### **Stage 3 - Review Panel**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 2, you can request that your complaint is progressed to a review panel at Stage 3. The review panel consists of three independent people who consider the complaint.

Aves Housing must ensure that the Review Panel Hearing takes place within 30 working days from the receipt of the Stage 3 request. Following the Review Panel Hearing, the Review Panel will produce a report of its findings and recommendations and will aim to send this to you and the Aves housing within five working days.

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### **The complaints process**

We log a formal complaint is a customer is not happy with the service they have received from us. We provide a stage one response in response to the complaint and if the customer remains unsatisfied with the resolution at this point, they can request for the complaint to be reviewed at stage two of our process. The complaint will then be reviewed by an independent Customer Experience Team. Once this process has been completed a customer has exhausted our formal complaints process and they can refer their issue to the Housing Ombudsman.

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### **The type of complaints we receive**

The two service areas we receive the majority of complaints about are:

- 1) **Repairs**. carried out by our in-house repairs team or our contractors, this is unsurprising given the high volume of jobs being managed on a daily basis.

2) **Our Neighbourhoods team.** These are mostly around antisocial behaviour (ASB). This includes how residents feel the issue is being handled or progressed or when they are not happy with the outcome of an ASB case.

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## **Learning from complaints and improving our services**

It's really important to take on board the feedback our customers give us as part of our complaints process and learn from it. Here you can find details of some of the areas we're currently reviewing and improvements we're looking to introduce.

### **Our repairs service**

A high percentage of our repair complaints relate to damp and mould. We, along with other housing associations, are working with the Housing Ombudsman to explore new ways to deal with damp and mould enquiries and complaints through:

looking at specialist services we can employ

better diagnosis of the causes

clear explanations for residents of how to minimise damp, mould and condensation

introducing new monitoring and alert technologies.

As a result we are looking to reduce complaints in this area during 2024 and will report back on progress later in the year.

We are getting in touch with residents who tell us they aren't satisfied when they complete our post-repair survey. This proactive approach means we can find out what the issue is and resolve it, rather than the customer having to raise a complaint.

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## **How we deal with antisocial behaviour (ASB) and transfer requests**

From some of the complaints we've received that relate to this area, we've identified that we need to manage residents' expectations better and also provide explanations for why we have taken a certain decision or course of action in a clearer and more

empathetic way. The feedback from customers who ask to be moved because of ASB has already led to improvements in the wording of the letters we send about transfer requests, and also the information the lettings team are provided with about the types of vacant properties we have so they can keep residents better informed.

We have also identified that we need to improve our ways of working relating to record keeping, this ensure that we have accurate information to record the things we do and why we do them.

We are also working to improve the way we work with residents who have vulnerabilities to ensure we take these fully into account before or during a complaint is made and that all decisions and outcomes are fair in the circumstances.

We are currently working on these areas and hope that by providing our neighbourhood teams with more training and guidance it will help to reduce the number of complaints and provide a better overall service for our residents.

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### **Other useful sources of ideas for improving services**

It isn't only feedback from customers who raise complaints that results in improvements to the way we deliver services, however. We take into account feedback from a range of sources, including: our ongoing customer satisfaction surveys; from determinations that the Housing Ombudsman issues; and suggestions from our teams who are well placed to see where we can do things more effectively and deliver better customer service.