

Complaints Policy

Policy Statement

Newark Emmaus Trust strive to give our residents great service during their time with us in our Supported Housing Project but sometimes things can go wrong. We aim to put things right quickly and learn from each complaint to improve things for the future.

We define a complaint as “an expression of dissatisfaction” about the standards of service we provide, or a lack of action by the Trust, it’s staff or those acting on our behalf that affects a resident or a group of residents.

A complaint can be raised by any resident about their home or the services we provide. We recognize complaints may come in many forms from our resident surveys to something you may raise with your keyworker.

Anyone who raises a complaint can expect to be dealt with:

- With dignity, respect and courtesy
- With impartiality and objectively
- Be listened to without assumptions being made
- Have the complaint dealt with in an open and transparent way
- The complaint will not impair future relationships
- We will be honest and admit if we get things wrong then put things right
- We will give a written explanation if we do not accept your complaint
- We will provide contact details of other organisations who can offer help with your complaint if you are unhappy.

We will ensure this process is accessible and you receive help if needed from us or external bodies. We can help with different formats or easy to understand formats or your keyworker or any other person you choose can support you.

Our complaints policy has 2 stages with stage 1 being a thorough investigation and stage 2 is a review of the investigation if you are dissatisfied with the result of Stage 1. At stage 2 we will supply other organisations you can contact, including the Housing ombudsman.

1. Purpose and Scope of this Policy

- 1.1 To ensure Newark Emmaus Trust (NET) provide a transparent, fair and defective management service with a high-quality response to complaints including those from the Housing Ombudsman in line with regulatory requirements.
- 1.2 This policy sets out Newark Emmaus Trust’s commitments to responding to complaints and seeks to ensure:
 - Complaints are treated fairly and politely with dignity and respect
 - If you complain you are not discriminated against or victimised in any way
 - You are supported to make a complaint and given access and advised doing so
 - We aim for early resolution of complaints with an apology if we get things wrong.

- We will strive to conclude all investigations within the timescales.
- We will comply with regulatory requirements.
- We will learn from each complaint and review procedures to prevent future recurrence.

1.3 Complaints within the scope of this policy include those from:

- Complainants including residents of our supported housing scheme.
- Someone who is affected by a decision or action taken by us (NET)
- Someone affected by our services such as relatives, neighbours, agents or professionals (health or social)
- Someone acting on behalf of any of our residents with signed consent giving permission to act on their behalf.
- Housing Ombudsman or other officials.

1.4 The following are not within the scope of this Policy

- Complaints from colleagues which will be dealt with by Line Managers.
- Complaints re care or treatment which will be dealt with under our Safeguarding Policy.

2 Responsibilities and Risk

2.1 Responsibilities

- * All staff for recording of initial complaints
- * Head of Service Delivery to oversee and investigate complaints and update the system.
- * Seniors and Managers reviewing complaints.
- * Head of Service Delivery for preparation of reporting requirements.

2.2 Risk

2.2.1 Failure to comply with this policy could result in NET suffering regulatory Downgrade, complaint handling failure order requirements to implement remedial procedures or financial penalties.

3 Policy Details and Guidance

3.1 What is a complaint?

3.1.1 A complaint is an expression or dissatisfaction about the standard of service or lack of action by its staff or our organisation or those acting on our behalf, affecting individual residents or a group of residents (Housing Ombudsman).

3.1.2 Complaints can be raised by anyone in section 1.3 of the policy about their homes or the services NET or contractors working for NET provide. We also recognise complaints come in many forms without the word complaint being used.

3.1.3 The following issues are not classed as complaints;

- 1st time service requests i.e reporting a repair for the 1st time would go down as a service request and go through usual repairs reporting process.
- Requests for information about NET services.
- Reporting an issue with a neighbour or another resident would be dealt with under our ASB / House rules section of Licence, exceptions to this can be reviewed in some circumstances.

We always write to the complainant to explain why we have not accepted a complaint.

3.1.4 We strive to provide an accessible complaints service for all NET residents, and all complaints will be considered unless:

- * The issue being complained about took place more than 12 months ago.
- * The issue has already been investigated and closed.
- * There is evidence the complaint is based on false information.
- * The issue has been referred to court or is part of legal proceedings.
- * We consider the residents / service users complaint or actions to be unreasonable.
- * The resident / service user demands are unreasonable by nature or they make excessive demands that impact our service such as:
 1. Asking for a response in an unreasonable timescale.
 2. Insisting on communicating with a particular staff member.
 3. Continual calls, texts, emailed letters and visits.
 4. Changing the issues or nature of the complaint or raising unrelated concerns.
 5. Refusing to accept a discussion after investigations are completed.
 6. Non-cooperation with staff such as not allowing access to properties so issues can be resolved.
 7. Continuing to pursue the same complaint with no new information.

3.2 How to complain, and available support

3.2.1 Complaints can be made in a number of ways:

- * In writing to Newark Emmaus Trust, 37 Northgate, Newark NG24 1HD
- * By telephoning 01636 612892
- * By emailing info@newarkemmaustrust.co.uk
- * In person to your keyworker or any staff member.
- * To the Housing Ombudsman.
- * With support from a relevant professional.

3.2.2 We can provide a complaints policy in various formats or explain it to you or provide an easy read version or assist you to make your complaint.

3.2.3 We will provide an overview of the policy and procedure when you are inducted into the project and issued with your contract / Licence Agreement and you can get advice on making a complaint from any staff member who can support you.

3.2.4 Further external advice is available during any stage of the complaints process from a variety of external organisations including:

- * The Housing Ombudsman
- * Shelter
- * Citizens Advice

3.3 How NET will manage your complaint

3.3.1 When a complaint is made we aim to put things right as soon as we are contacted. We will give the resident written confirmation of the actions we are taking. This is the 1st contact resolution. If this has still not been resolved, we will record it as a Stage 1 Formal Complaint and we will:

- Write to you within 3 working days and confirm the issue and the outcome you have asked for.
- Investigate the complaint and deal with issues immediately that we feel cannot wait.
- Manage your expectations from the start and be clear what desired outcomes are reasonable or realistic.

3.3.2 There are 2 stages to our complaints policy; Stage 1 is overseen by the Head of Service Delivery and Stage 2, the Head of Service Delivery will have the outcome reviewed by the CEO who may consult the Committee.

3.3.3 Stage 1

The Head of Service Delivery will remain impartial and objective and will:

- Consider what has happened and what should have happened and consider future learning outcomes.
- Maintain contact from the outset to discuss concerns and gather further information.
- Provide a full response within 10 working days and give details including detail of actions or remedies and how to escalate the complaint if the complainant is still dissatisfied. NET will of course apologise if we got things wrong.
- If the issue is complex and we need more time to put together a full response we will write to you to ask for a further 10 days in which to respond in full and if you do not agree to this we will provide you with relevant Ombudsman details if an agreement cannot be reached.
- We will ensure all actions are monitored through to completion
- We will respond to any Ombudsman enquiries within required timescales.

3.3.4 Stage 2 (Excludes MP, Councillors or Ombudsman enquiries)

Complainants can request NET to review the complaint if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage 1. The Head of Service Delivery will acknowledge the request within 3 working days and detail why the complainant is asking for the review and confirm the outcome sought.

All Stage 2 complaints will be overseen by the CEO who will:

- Provide a full response within 20 working days with an outcome and explanation of decisions made plus actions we may take or remedies available or how to get further help.
- If we cannot do a full response within 20 working days, we will ask to extend by 10 further working days and confirm this in writing. If the extension cannot be agreed, we will give details of the relevant Ombudsman.
- We will ensure actions of Stage 2 are monitored through to completion.

3.3.5 We will not refuse a Stage 2 request unless we feel it is unreasonable in which case we will explain why in writing. These reasons may include: -

- The demands made are unreasonable or distressing
- The request is over 20 days from the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation

3.4 Putting things right

3.4.1 At both Stage 1 and Stage 2, we can offer resolutions where the complaint is partially or fully upheld. We will consider the following when in cases where a resolution is offered: -

- The complainant's particular circumstances
- The complainant's vulnerabilities
- The impact of the situation
- The severity of the service failure

3.4.2 We will be fair and consistent and not make promises we cannot deliver.

3.4.3 In some cases the complainant may have legal entitlement to redress in such cases NET may need legal advice before offering resolutions.

3.5 Training

3.5.1 Net will provide complaints training to colleagues to ensure complaints are managed effectively in line with the Ombudsman's requirements and complaints handling code.

4 Monitoring and Reporting

Chairman: James Howlett
Treasurer: Jeremy Blatherwick
CEO: Nicola Burley
Head of Finance and HR: Jackie Duers
Head of Service Delivery: Sue Huddlestone

Reg Charity No. 1017344

4.1 Complainants will be asked to complete a complaints handling feedback form so we can monitor how we did.

4.2 The Head of Service Delivery will monitor the status of open complaints daily to check on actions required.

4.3 The CEO will report outcomes of complaints to Committee meetings

4.4 The Head of Service Delivery will report annually on complaints including those received from the relevant 3rd parties and the Housing Ombudsman, including any statutory notices and analysis trends and improvements made.

4.5 NET website will include complaints data and annual self-assessments done for the Housing Ombudsman plus reports done by the Ombudsman.

This policy has been ratified and approved by the NET Committee and will be reviewed in line with improvements or changes in Legislation annually.

Signed approved by: -



J Howlett Chairman

Newark Emmaus Trust

^{29th}
Date: June 2026