**Maldon Housing Association Complaints Policy and Procedure**

It is our intention to deal with any concerns which our residents may have informally if possible within a reasonable timescale and to achieve an agreed resolution.

**Our aim is to resolve all concerns in an informal and amicable way.**

**Informal process**

1. If you have a concern about any aspect of your accommodation or if you consider that the Association is in breach of its obligations you should first discuss the matter with the Support Manager who will discuss with you what may be done and will usually be able to help you sort the problem out.
2. The Support Manager may need to discuss the concern with the Chief Executive and/or the Chairman of the Board in which case the Support Manager will inform you of the timescale for doing this and the outcome. You may feel that the matter is serious enough for you to want to have a meeting.
3. If you request a meeting with the Chief Executive or the Chairman of the Board you are free to bring someone to the meeting to help you explain your case. The Support Manager may be prepared to do this.
4. Any meeting with the Chief Executive or Chairman of the Board will be arranged within two weeks of your request.
5. If your complaint concerns the Support Manager in your house you should make your concern known to the Chief Executive who will follow the steps outlined above.
6. Notes will be kept of any meetings and you may request copies.
7. A written copy of any agreed resolution will be sent to you within two weeks

We hope that by approaching any concern in a mutually supportive way we can resolve all matters in this informal way. It may happen that the Association is unable to meet all your expectations with regard to the outcome you want.

**Formal process**

1. If you are dissatisfied with the resolution at the end of the informal process you may request a formal hearing before a panel of three Board members who have not had any previous involvement in your complaint.
2. You must make this request in writing to the Chief Executive who will pass it on to the designated Board member for formal complaints.
3. The designated Board member will arrange a hearing within three weeks of your formal request.
4. You have the right to bring a friend to the meeting to support you.
5. If you wish to present any written evidence this must be sent to the designated Board member at least five working days before the hearing so that the Board members who will hear your complaint have the opportunity to read it.
6. At this hearing the Association may be represented by the Chief Executive and/or the Chairman of the Board.
7. Any written evidence the Association wishes to present will be made available to you and the three Board members at least five working days before the hearing.
8. At the hearing you will have the opportunity to explain your complaint. You may arrange for a representative to attend the hearing and do this on your behalf.
9. The panel may invite any person who they feel could provide additional information to the hearing. Both parties will be advised of any such invitation at least five days before the hearing.
10. The Association will also have the opportunity to explain how the complaint has been dealt with and any outcome to date.
11. The panel members may ask either party questions.
12. When the panel members are satisfied that they have heard sufficient evidence to enable them to come to a conclusion they will ask other parties to leave the room.
13. The panel may wish to invite both parties to discuss a proposed resolution before coming to a definite decision.
14. Any decision of the panel will be communicated to you in writing and is final.

If the Association fails to deal with the complaint, or, in the resident’s view continues not to fulfil its obligations the resident can obtain advice and information about his or her remedies at law from a local Citizen’s Advice Bureau or Law Centre or from a Solicitor.

The Association is subject to any guidance on housing management practice issued by the Housing Corporation with the approval of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Association subscribes to the Independent Housing Ombudsman Scheme and any resident can ask the Ombudsman to deal with any complaint which he or she feels has not been properly dealt with by the above procedure.

SHOULD YOU WISH TO, YOU MAY CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: -

 Independent Housing Ombudsman Ltd

 Norman House

 105-109 Strand

 London WC2R 0AA

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