



## **iCare Housing Complaints Policy & Procedures**

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# Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 3
- 2. Purpose ..... 3
- 3. Complaint Definitions ..... 3
- 4. Policy Objectives ..... 4
- 5. How to make a Complaint ..... 4
- 7. Outcomes of Investigation..... 5
- 8. Repetitive or Unreasonable Complaints..... 6
- 9. Mediation ..... 7
- 10. Standard Complaint Procedure ..... 7
- 11. Complaint Investigation Procedure ..... 9

**Appendix A10**

- 1. Complaint Intake & Acknowledgement ..... 10
- 2. Complaint Categorisation & Initial Assessment ..... 10
- 3. Investigation Plan & Methodology ..... 11
- 4. Timeline of Events..... 12
- 5. Findings & Outcome ..... 12
- 6. Recommendations & Follow-Up Actions ..... 13
- 7. Communication to Complainant ..... 13
- 8. Closure & Recordkeeping ..... 14

## **1. Introduction**

iCare Housing is an Approved Housing Body operating under the oversight of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA), as established by the Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019. A central aim of iCare is to deliver an exceptional level of service to our tenants and other stakeholders. To support this, we actively encourage feedback from service users regarding the support and services we offer. This policy explains how iCare responds to feedback and outlines the process for raising a complaint. It applies to all complaints received, irrespective of the department involved.

## **2. Purpose**

iCare Housing is dedicated to delivering high-quality services that meet the expectations of its service users while fulfilling all legal and regulatory obligations. Our Board of Directors and staff are committed to maintaining a culture of excellence, which forms the foundation of our commitment to first-rate service. This document sets out the policy and procedures we follow in handling complaints, ensuring all concerns are addressed fairly, confidentially, and promptly

## **3. Complaint Definitions**

A complaint refers to any expression of dissatisfaction from a customer regarding the quality or absence of a service provided.

Customers may raise complaints for reasons such as:

- Perceived unfair treatment by iCare
- Services they are entitled to not being provided
- Poor quality or inadequate services
- Incorrect decisions that overlook relevant information
- Ignored requests for service or information

Customers include current tenants of iCare-managed or owned properties, potential tenants, local authorities, contractors, government agencies, industry partners, and local residents.

A formal use of the word "complaint" is not required for us to treat an issue as such. We differentiate complaints from general service requests or incident reports (e.g., repairs or antisocial behaviour).

## **4. Policy Objectives**

iCare encourages feedback from customers, including complaints, and views it as a valuable opportunity to improve and refine the services we offer.

We are committed to delivering fair and inclusive services to all customers, regardless of their age, gender, civil or marital status, religious beliefs, political views, ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability, or caring responsibilities.

Our goal is to provide a consistently high standard of service, and where a complaint is made, to address it promptly and effectively.

While we strive to offer excellent service at all times, we acknowledge that issues may occasionally arise. To address this, we have implemented a complaints process that is transparent, consistent, and fair. Complaints will be handled impartially and in confidence, with information only shared with staff who are directly involved on a need-to-know basis.

We will not respond to complaints with defensiveness or hostility. Instead, we recognise that constructive complaints can lead to meaningful conversations and service improvements.

We are equally committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and dignity of our staff. If a complaint is found to be unreasonable or repeatedly submitted without grounds, we reserve the right to discontinue engagement.

Our aim is to resolve complaints efficiently and prevent them from escalating, as this can be both time-consuming and burdensome for everyone involved.

Complaint records will be managed in line with our Data Protection Policy, and we will provide customers with feedback about how their complaint influenced any subsequent changes in our policies or practices.

Filing a complaint will not adversely affect the customer's ongoing or future relationship with iCare.

## **5. How to make a Complaint**

You can make a complaint in person, by phone, in writing, or via email:

- You can phone iCare on 1800 233 244
- You may also email us at: [info@icarehousing.ie](mailto:info@icarehousing.ie)
- Or write to: iCare Housing, 407 – 409 The Capel Building, Mary's Abbey, Dublin 7.

When submitting your complaint, please ensure you include the following information:

- Your full name, address, phone number (and email, if applicable), and whether you are submitting the complaint for yourself or on someone else's behalf
- A clear summary of your concerns, including any relevant dates, times, and specific incidents – starting with the most significant issue
- A statement of what you would like to happen as a result (e.g. an apology, clarification, or action)
- Your preferred method for us to contact you

- Any supporting documents or evidence that relate to your complaint.

## **6. Responding to a Complaint**

iCare will send you a formal acknowledgement of your complaint within five working days, outlining how we plan to proceed.

Any complaints made by telephone or in person will be recorded and retained in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.

Initially, your complaint will be reviewed and addressed by the most appropriate member of staff—typically the frontline worker or direct manager responsible for the relevant service. We will inform you who has been assigned to look into your concerns.

We will outline our interpretation of your complaint and ask you to confirm its accuracy. You'll also be invited to share what outcome you are seeking.

Our goal is to resolve most complaints within 30 working days. If it becomes clear that more time is needed, we will:

- Inform you of the expected timeframe for completion
- Provide updates on progress at least every 20 working days
- Set out clearly the next steps, including timeframes for any further action or investigation

In certain situations, we may suggest meeting with you in person to discuss the matter.

In some cases, we may recommend mediation or a similar method to help resolve the issue.

We will not unreasonably refuse to progress your complaint through our procedure. If, for any reason, we decide not to escalate your complaint further, we will provide a clear explanation of our decision.

## **7. Outcomes of Investigation**

Once the investigation into your complaint is concluded, you will be provided with a detailed summary of the findings. This will include, where relevant:

- The decision made regarding your complaint
- An explanation of how that decision was reached
- Any corrective measures or remedies offered (if applicable)
- Information on any remaining actions to be completed (if applicable)
- Guidance on how to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome

We will inform you of the results of the investigation and, if necessary, issue a more comprehensive report. The reasoning behind any conclusions will be clearly explained.

Our response will be issued once a conclusion has been reached—even if certain actions needed to resolve the matter fully are still ongoing. Any such actions will be tracked, and you will receive regular updates until they are completed.

If you are not satisfied with the decision, you may appeal by writing to the Delivery and Operations Manager within 15 working days of receiving the outcome. The Delivery and Operations Manager will reassess your case and issue a further response within 10 working days. If more time is needed to ensure a fair and thorough review, we will inform you of any expected delays and when a final response can be expected.

In cases where serious allegations are made about members of staff, our Human Resources Department will be informed. iCare reserves the right to manage such complaints through a different process than outlined above, where appropriate

## **8. Repetitive or Unreasonable Complaints**

This part of the policy refers to a small number of individuals whose behaviour or approach to complaints places an undue burden on iCare staff and resources.

iCare reserves the right to exclude certain complaints from the standard complaints process if they are being pursued in an unreasonable or disruptive manner.

While we believe that all individuals have the right to be heard, understood, and treated respectfully, we are equally committed to protecting the rights and wellbeing of our staff. As such, we will not tolerate abusive or aggressive behaviour, excessive demands, or unreasonable persistence from complainants.

In determining whether a complaint is being pursued unreasonably, iCare will consider whether:

- The complaint is made (or conducted) in a way that seeks to harass, cause delay, or serve any other improper purpose
- There is no reasonable basis for continuing the complaint
- The complainant displays aggressive, abusive or threatening behaviour
- Unreasonable demands or persistence are demonstrated
- The resolution process is hindered due to a refusal to cooperate, frequent changes to the complaint, or the introduction of new unrelated issues

Any decision to stop responding to a complainant or to apply restrictions will be taken only after consultation with, and approval by, the CEO or Deputy CEO.

Should such a decision be made, we will provide a written explanation outlining the reasons, the duration of any restrictions, and the terms involved. We will ensure that access to emergency support or essential

services is not compromised.

This decision may be reviewed if the individual’s conduct improves and becomes more appropriate.

## 9. Mediation

Mediation is an impartial service designed to help resolve disputes by facilitating open dialogue between both parties. It can be especially useful in uncovering deeper issues behind complaints and finding constructive, creative solutions that improve communication and relationships between you and iCare Housing.

If the matter relates to a landlord-tenant dispute and previous attempts by iCare to resolve the issue have not been successful, we may recommend using the mediation services provided by the Residential Tenancies Board.

For other types of complaints, we will consider and suggest alternative appropriate mediation options that suit the nature of the issue.

This policy will be reviewed at least once every two years to ensure it remains current and effective.

## 10. Standard Complaint Procedure

What happens when we receive a complaint	Receive complaint- Day 1, note this date in the tracker. *this should always be a working day Mon-Fri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine whether this is a complaint and ensure all required information, such as name and address, has been provided.</li> <li>• If the complaint is from a third party, verify that there is authorisation on file to handle the matter with this party.</li> <li>• Identify the nature of the complaint and the appropriate department for a formal response.</li> <li>• Update the tracker accordingly.</li> </ul>
Send a written acknowledgement to the complainant, confirming that their complaint has been received.	Required within 5 <u>working days</u> from receipt of the complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the standard response to the complainant, ensuring that all dates and timelines are accurate.</li> <li>• Where necessary, issue a form for the third party to complete with the complainant to authorise a response with specific details.</li> </ul>
Review the received complaint and assign it to the appropriate department.	Allocate to department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate the matter to the appropriate department via email, ensuring the Delivery and Operations manager is copied in the correspondence.</li> <li>• Confirm the date for the final response review, allowing 20 working days to provide an update.</li> </ul>

Ensure the complainant receives an update in writing	No later than 20 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm whether the complaint response will be completed within the 30-day permitted timeframe.</li> <li>▪ If this is unlikely, send written notification to the complainant advising of the delay and providing a revised expected response date</li> </ul>
Issue a final written response to the complainant.	A Final response will be provided within 30 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the response fully addresses all elements of the complaint.</li> <li>▪ Verify that it is issued within the permitted 30 working day timeframe.</li> <li>▪ Clearly outline the appeals process.</li> <li>▪ Record the registered post tracking number in the tracker and update the final response date accordingly.</li> </ul>

Should the complaint response be appealed, challenged, or escalated further	From Day 1- The complaint is appealed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verify whether the appeal was received within 15 working days of the final response.</li> <li>▪ Notify the Delivery and Operations Manager of the appeal via email and confirm the required response timeframe.</li> <li>▪ Update the tracker to reflect that an appeal to the final response has been received.</li> </ul>
Provide the complainant with the final response in writing	10 working days from receipt of the appeal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The final response to the appeal, including findings, will be issued by the Delivery and Operations Manager.</li> <li>▪ If a further appeal is submitted, it will be reviewed by the Delivery and Operations Manager and escalated as appropriate.</li> </ul>

## **11. Complaint Investigation Procedure**

When handling a complaint investigation, the following process should be followed:

- Complete the Complaint Investigation Template (see Appendix A).

During the investigation, several key factors should be considered to ensure a fair and thorough outcome. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The duration of the issue or problem
- How often has the issue occurred
- The seriousness of any service failure or omission
- The number of separate issues or failings involved
- The overall impact on the customer
- The quality and completeness of records on the Housing Management System
- What actions staff members had already taken to address the issue before the complaint was submitted
- Any specific vulnerabilities or personal circumstances affecting the customer

Once the investigation is complete, the filled-out template should be submitted to the Delivery & Operations Manager. They will review it and finalise the written response to be sent to the complainant.

## Appendix A

### 1. Complaint Intake & Acknowledgement

Complaint Ref. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

Complainant Role:  Tenant  Third Party  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary of Complaint (in complainant's own words): \_\_\_\_\_

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Acknowledgement Sent:  Yes  No Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Complaint Categorisation & Initial Assessment

Complaint Type:  Anti-social Behaviour  Maintenance  Communication  Staff  Rent/Financial

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Urgency Level:  Low  Medium  High

Potential Breach of AHB Standards?  Yes  No

Relevant Policy/Procedure Referenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Assigned: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Investigation Plan & Methodology

Investigation Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Information to be Collected:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Tenancy records  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Maintenance reports  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Email/call logs  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Interviews (if required)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Other documents: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Complainant Interviewed (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Date Staff Interviewed (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_



**Conclusion:**

- Complaint Upheld
- Complaint Partially Upheld
- Complaint Not Upheld

Reasoning:

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**6. Recommendations & Follow-Up Actions**

Remedial Action Required:

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Deadline for Action Completion:

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Responsible Staff/Team: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Communication to Complainant**

Method of Communication:  Email  Phone  Letter  In-person

Date Outcome Communicated: \_\_\_\_\_

Appeals Process Explained:  Yes  No

External Escalation Route (if applicable): e.g., RTB, Ombudsman

## 8. Closure & Recordkeeping

Complaint Closed On: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Line Manager Review Completed:  Yes  No

File Archived:  Yes - Location/Reference: \_\_\_\_\_

## Policy Ownership and Version Control

### Version Control Table

Author	Reviewed By	Date	Approved By	Date	Update	Version
Charlotte Corrigan	COO	05/09/2025	ARC	16/9/2025	16/09/2027	1.0