

YMCA Heart of England Compliment, Complaint and Feedback Policy

November 2025



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. YMCA Heart of England (HoE) is committed to building and maintaining positive relationships with the people who rely on our services and all our stakeholders.
- 1.2. We seek to demonstrate our intent around this is through the effective handling of compliments, complaints and feedback and aim to provide a prompt response to those providing this to us.
- 1.3. Managing and responding to compliments, complaints and feedback well will enable us to:
 - Demonstrate our commitment to our service users and other stakeholders.
 - Demonstrate our commitment to providing an excellent standard of service.
 - Understand where, why and how and has gone well or an issue has occurred.
 - Learn from a situation and prevent it from happening again in the future.

Why do we have a policy?

- It helps us to monitor and improve the services we deliver.
- It helps us to identify good practice, recognise areas where improvement may be required and any changes we may need to make.
- If we do something wrong, we want to learn from it and take action to prevent it from happening again.
- If we do something well, we want to continue to maintain these same standards and share this best practice across our services.
- It helps to ensure that we handle things in a consistent way so that everyone who wishes to make a compliment, complaint or offer feedback will be receive the same level of service.

What services does this policy cover?

- Assets
- Development
- Eden Café
- Community Hub & Hospitality
- Housing
- Nursery Services
- Repairs & Maintenance
- Youth Services

What locations are relevant to this policy?

- 1.4 All customer facing services across Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| • Billy Bears Nursery | • Northfield Sports Hall |
| • Bishopsgate | • St Margarets |
| • Chris Bryant Centre | • The Coppice |
| • Eden Café | • The Orchard |
| • Endeavour Court | • The Vineyard |
| • Henrietta Lofts | • Will Steel House |
| • Magdelene Court | • Harry Watton House |
| • Mary Court | • Any other external / community location |

2. Compliments

- 2.1. It is really helpful for us to hear about the things that may have gone well. This could be a positive experience you have had or something that you feel we have done well.
- 2.2. Hearing your positive feedback helps us to share good practice and ensure that we maintain the highest possible standards of service delivery.

3. Compliments Process

- 3.1. Once received your compliment and any action arising from it will be acknowledged and responded to within **10** working days of receipt.
- 3.2. Compliments can be made in a variety of ways including:
 - On our website <https://ymcaheartofengland.org.uk/>
 - Email complaintsandfeedback@ymcaheartofengland.org.uk ,
 - Letter: YMCA Heart of England, 301 Reservoir Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 6DF
 - Phone: 0121 477 4644
 - In person: visit any of the sites listed under 1.6 of this policy.

4. Complaints

- 4.1. HoE is committed to delivering excellent services, but we recognise that at times, for some people things can go wrong.
- 4.2. We may make mistakes, or you may not feel entirely happy with an aspect of our service delivery. If this is the case, then we want to hear from you.

What is a Complaint?

- 4.3. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by HoE, or those acting on our behalf.
- 4.4. A complaint may come from any person or organisation that has a legitimate interest in HoE services.
- 4.5. A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing. This policy does not cover complaints from staff, who should refer to the Employee Handbook.
- 4.6. This policy does not cover a complaint that would fall under Safeguarding Policy although separate guidance on safeguarding can be located 8.14 of this policy.

What is a Service Request?

- 4.7 A service request is a routine request for action or service that does not express dissatisfaction. It is part of normal service delivery and examples could include:
 - Reporting a repair for the first time.
 - Reporting an anti-social behaviour case for the first time.

- Requesting information about tenancy or booking a community space.
- Asking for an update on a scheduled maintenance visit.

Key Difference

- 4.8 If a customer is simply asking for something to be done (e.g. a repair or information), it is a service request.
- 4.9 If they are unhappy about how something was handled or the quality/timeliness of service, then this is when it would be classed as a complaint.

Additional Context

4.10 This policy recognises that complaints may come from and be about:

- YMCA Services
- Residents
- General public
- Local Authority
- Local stakeholders (other voluntary groups, forums, businesses, and charities)
- Young people / parents / carers / guardians
- Contractors and suppliers
- Staff
- Volunteers

4.11 Where the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of HoE we will:

- Always listen and try to understand the complainant's view.
- Distinguish between informal and formal complaints.
- Help residents in making a complaint directly or by getting assistance from an outside agency.
- Ensure that the policy and procedures of how to complain are translated into relevant languages.
- Investigate complaints promptly.
- Give prompt feedback to the complainant.
- Aim to be objective when making judgements following complaints.
- Learn from formal complaints when reviewing policies and procedures.
- Endeavour to gain the opinions of staff, residents and stakeholders before the policy is next reviewed.
- Review this policy every three years or earlier if necessary.

5 Types of Complaint

- 5.10 This policy will cover a broad range of complaints coming from any number of sources.
- 5.11 When we receive a complaint it can be dealt with in two ways: *Informally* or *Formally*.
- 5.12 Dealing with a complaint informally involves taking steps to resolve an issue without the need to follow the formal procedure.
- 5.13 This could be dealing with the complaint at source e.g. a customer expressing dissatisfaction with an order at Eden, a resolution could be to replace the order or offer a complementary refreshment. This would still be logged as a complaint, but the resolution method used was informal.
- 5.14 The nature of a complaint is broadened out to include any of the following below and is not exhaustive:
- A funder is unhappy that statistical returns have not been completed.
 - A contractor being insulted by a resident.
 - A resident verbally abusing a member of the public.
 - A Councillor is unhappy with a decision of HoE
 - A local business complains against litter it feels residents are dropping.
 - A resident complains of ongoing failures to resolve a long-standing repair issue.
 - A resident complaining about the condition their home has been left in after maintenance has been completed.
 - A young person who is dissatisfied with the attitude or conduct of a Youth Worker or representative of HoE.
 - A partner organisation involved in delivering services to young people is dissatisfied with the attitude or conduct of a Youth Worker or representative of HoE.
 - A member of the public accessing Eden Café is dissatisfied with service received or conduct of a HoE representative.
 - A partner organisation or organisation hiring out available spaces at HoE is dissatisfied with the booking process.
 - A partner organisation or organisation hiring out available spaces at HoE is dissatisfied with the level of service provided by HoE during the time they hired the space.
 - A parent is dissatisfied with the attitude or conduct of a staff member providing childcare from Billy Bears Nursery.
 - Any other person or organisation that has any concerns about any of the services being provided by HoE.
 - Any service request has already been considered through the normal channels and the person making the request is either dissatisfied with the outcome or the handling of this request.
- 5.15 In some instances, we may receive a complaint via a councillor or MP enquiry. In such cases, we would look to follow the same process for acknowledging and responding to these complaints.

6 Making a Complaint

6.10 Complaints can be made in a variety of ways including:

- On our website <https://ymcaheartofengland.org.uk/>
- Email complaintsandfeedback@ymcaheartofengland.org.uk ,
- Letter: YMCA Heart of England, 301 Reservoir Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 6DF
- Phone: 0121 477 4644
- In person.: visit any of the listed under 1.6 of this policy.

7 Complaint Process

7.10 HoE has a complaints process in place to ensure there is a consistent approach to complaints across all departments and regions, ensuring that all complaints are treated seriously and resolved at the earliest possible opportunity.

7.11 Our complaints procedure has **2 Stages**.

7.12 Every HoE has a nominated lead, this is typically the service manager who takes ownership of complaints received for that area of service.

7.13 If a complaint progresses to Stage 2 then an independent or more senior manager from the same department will review the complaint impartially to determine if they agree with the original findings or uphold the complaint that has been made.

8 Complaints Stages

Stage 1

8.10 A complaint can be raised in any of the methods described in section 6 of this policy.

8.11 All complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of the date of receipt by the relevant Service Manager, who will be dealing with your complaint.

8.12 The Manager will fully investigate your complaint and will involve the relevant colleagues where necessary in any decisions regarding the outcome of your complaint.

8.13 HoE will maintain a full log of all complaints received for monitoring and reporting purposes including complying with the Governments Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (TSM's).

8.14 A full written response will be received from the Investigating Manager within 10 working days.

8.15 If a complaint is going to take longer than this to resolve, the Manager will write to the complainant to explain the delay and advise of when they can expect to receive a detailed reply.

8.16 If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the response received or feel that the problem has not been resolved, a request to escalate the complaint to stage 2 of the complaints policy can be made.

Stage 2

8.17 To proceed to stage 2 of the complaints process a complainant must contact us in writing within 5 working days of receiving the stage 1 complaint outcome letter.

8.18 The complaint will again be acknowledged within 5 working days of the date of receipt and the complainant will receive a response within 15 working days.

8.19 The outcome of the complaint at this stage will also include additional steps that could be considered should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the outcome.

Still Dissatisfied

8.20 If a complainant has exhausted our complaints process and would still like to escalate their concerns further, they could consider getting in contact with our regulators, as appropriate:

8.21 We will be happy to support any complainant to make this contact if this is required:

Housing Ombudsman Service

Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square, London E14 9GE

Tel: 0300 111 3000 Fax: 020 7831 1942

info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Advertising Standards Authority

To make a complaint about advertisements or emails received from YMCA Heart of England: <https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html>

The Charity Commission

To make a complaint about a charity:

<https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-charity>

The Information Commissioner's Office

To make a complaint about data protection:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Ofsted

To make a complaint about a provider Ofsted regulate:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/complaints-procedure>

- 8.22 If we receive a complaint which has been escalated via a regulatory body e.g., Housing Ombudsman we would ensure that we adhere to the timescales set out in the complaint handling code and ensure any information requested is returned within these timescales.
- 8.23 If the complaint relates to any issues relating to the safeguarding of an adult or child in receipt of services delivered by HoE please ensure you contact the following organisations, where appropriate:

Birmingham City Council

Safeguarding Adults Team

P.O Box 15537

Birmingham

B2 2PQ

BSABsupportteam@birmingham.gov.uk

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership

PO Box 17340

BIRMINGHAM

B2 2DR

BSCP.ContactUs@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Coventry Safeguarding Board

PO Box 15

Council House

Earl Street

Coventry

CV1 5RR

Adults: CoventrySAB@coventry.gov.uk

Children: CoventryCSCP@coventry.gov.uk

9 Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

- 9.1 HoE is committed to adhering to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which means:
- ***Definition of a Complaint:*** We adopt the Code's definition of a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by YMCA Heart of England or those acting on our behalf.

- Accessibility and Transparency: Our complaints process is easy to access, clearly explained, and available through multiple channels. We ensure residents are aware of their right to complain and how to do so.
- Timescales: We follow the Code's recommended timescales:
 - Acknowledge complaints within 5 working days.
 - Provide a full response within 10 working days at Stage 1 and 15 working days at Stage 2, or communicate any delays with clear reasons and revised timelines.
- Escalation and Ombudsman Access: If a complainant remains dissatisfied after exhausting our internal process, we will provide clear information on how to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- Learning and Continuous Improvement: We record all complaints, including informal resolutions, and use this data to identify trends, improve services, and report performance. We commit to publishing complaint performance data and completing an annual self-assessment against the Code.
- Resident Engagement: We will involve residents in shaping our complaints policy and procedures, ensuring their feedback informs improvements.

9.2 By following these principles, we aim to deliver a fair, transparent, and effective complaints process in line with national standards.

10 Feedback

10.10 Feedback is a way for our customers to provide their opinions, suggestions, or criticisms about the HoE services, or operations.

10.11 Feedback can be both positive and negative and can be given through various channels as detailed in under section 10 of this policy.

10.12 HoE will treat any feedback it receives constructively with the aims to improve areas of service for an individual person, team, relationship, or environment.

11 Feedback Process

11.10 Once received, your suggestion or idea will be forwarded to the most appropriate person (s) who will consider your suggestion.

11.11 All suggestions received will be responded to within 10 working days of receipt.

11.12 If any changes are made to services or working methods as a result of feedback it is our aim to update the person who originally communicated the feedback to us, wherever this is possible.

11.13 Feedback can be made in a variety of ways including:

- On our website <https://ymcaheartofengland.org.uk/>

- Email complaintsandfeedback@ymcaheartofengland.org.uk ,
- Letter: YMCA Heart of England, 301 Reservoir Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 6DF
- Phone: 0121 477 4644
- In person.: visit any of the sites listed under 1.6 of this policy.

12 Communication

12.10 This policy will be circulated each year to all organisations that may from time to time have dealings with HoE.

12.11 These may include:

- Other charities
- The Local Authority Departments that the YMCA is in contact with.
- Local community groups
- Local Businesses
- Our sub-contractors who provide regular services

13 Confidentiality

13.10 HoE will deal with the complaints in line with its confidentiality policy and procedures.

13.11 The identity of the residents or service users will remain anonymous, if requested and as far as is reasonably practicable. In exceptional circumstances where this is not the case the customer will be made aware.

13.12 Where the matter is being dealt with under the Organisation's Challenging Behaviour/Exclusions or Disciplinary Procedures etc, the customer will be notified.

14 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

14.10 It is recognised that HoE work with a diverse range of people, therefore, any correspondence or contact made will be sensitive to the particular needs of the customer.

14.11 In all cases, verbal contact will be made with the customer, if required we will utilise relevant translation services to ensure that we offer an inclusive and accessible service for all residents and services users.

14.12 A summary of the Complaints Policy is available online via our website www.ymcaheartofengland.org.uk where it can be viewed utilising the 'browse aloud' facility where it can be translated into a language of your choosing.

15 Training

15.10 Staff will ensure that all residents and service users are aware of their rights to complain and how to do so.

- 15.11 Staff will be trained in how to use this policy and any procedures that support its delivery.

16 Reporting and Governance

- 16.10 HoE will maintain robust governance arrangements to ensure transparency and accountability in complaint handling. This includes:


- *Complaint Logging and Monitoring*: All complaints, including informal resolutions, will be logged in a central system. Data will include complaint type, stage, outcome, and timescales.
- *Performance Reporting*: We will produce quarterly and annual reports summarising:
 - Volume and nature of complaints
 - Compliance with timescales
 - Outcomes and resolutions
 - Lessons learned and service improvements
- *Publication of Data*: In line with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, we will publish:
 - Annual complaint performance data
 - Our annual self-assessment against the Code
 - Actions taken to improve complaint handling
- *Board Oversight*: Complaint performance reports will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and presented to the Board at least annually to ensure strategic oversight.
- *Resident Engagement*: Residents will be consulted on the complaints process and invited to provide feedback on improvements. This will be documented and reported as part of governance reviews.
- *Continuous Improvement*: Findings from complaints will inform policy updates, staff training, and service delivery improvements. Progress will be tracked and reported in governance meetings.

17 Resident Involvement in Complaint Governance

- 17.1 HoE will actively involve residents in shaping and reviewing our complaints process by:

- Conducting annual surveys and focus groups on complaint handling.
- Publishing a summary of resident feedback and actions taken.
- Inviting resident representatives to participate in policy review panels where appropriate.

17.2 This ensures our approach reflects resident experience and meets the principles of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Produced by:	Tom Jackson
Date:	November 2025
Date Approved by Board/Committee:	06/11/2025
Chair Name (print):	MIKE HEW
Trustee Signature:	
Review Date:	November 2027

Audit / Changes Log

Change Dates	Description
31/10/2025	Added Explicit Reference to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code: While the policy mentioned adhering to timescales if escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, it do not explicitly state compliance with the Complaint Handling Code or reference its principles – New section created – section 9 - Compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code
31/10/2025	Added Reporting and Governance Section (Section 16): The Code requires landlords to publish complaint performance data and self-assessment against the Code. The previous policy didn't mention the annual self-assessment against the Code and publication of complaint data which we are required to produce – now added and covered in this section.
31/10/2025	Resident Involvement: The Complaint Handling Code encourages involving residents in shaping complaint policies. The previous policy mentioned gaining opinions before review but did not detail a formal resident engagement process for this – this has now been added and a specific - Resident Involvement in Complaint Governance section has been created (Section 17)

31/10/2025	<i>Updated the wording in section 5 to be clearer that even complaints handled 'informally' should still be logged as a complaint.</i>
31/10/2025	<i>Added clarification on what is defined as a service request and the key difference under – Section 4 – Complaints</i>
10/11/2025	<i>Additional point added to 5.14 under types of complaint giving a district example of a service request being progressed to a complaint where a person is dissatisfied with either the outcome or the service they received – Requested by HSY committee members on 06/11/2025.</i>