



# **Encircle Housing Association**

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**March 2019**

## **ENCIRCLE HOUSING** **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Policy Statement**

Encircle Housing are committed to providing a quality service to our tenants and service users. This complaints procedure is intended to deal fairly and promptly with anyone who is dissatisfied with the service that they are receiving or have received from Encircle Housing, or from any member of staff providing support in clients' own home, or from any other providers of services – i.e. support providers, contractors

### **Purpose**

Through our complaints procedure, we aim to respond quickly to comments received and make changes where appropriate. We wish to make it easy for you to express your concern about the services you are receiving and through the complaints process, achieve an outcome satisfactory to all parties concerned.

Encircle Housing have produced a complaints leaflet in an accessible format for people with learning disabilities who use our services (see separate brochure). This is used to help them complain about anything they are unhappy about and their support worker can assist them in making a complaint. Encircle Housing will also ensure that appropriate forms of communication are available on audio-tapes, picture boards, Braille, and offer the services of an interpreter where required.

### **Who can use Encircle Housing's Complaints Procedure?**

Anyone who is dissatisfied with the services they have received has a right to express their concern including:

- Tenants/service users
- Service providers
- Housing providers
- Friends, relatives, advocates
- Members of the general public

### **How Can I Complain?**

You can complain in writing, verbally, over the phone, by fax or e-mail or face to face. All complaints will be treated equally regardless of how they are reported.

It is essential to have a complaints procedure in place to enable tenants/service users to have a voice. It also allows management to monitor how effective Encircle Housing's services are and to make changes and address issues when mistakes are made.

Many of Encircle Housing's tenants/service users are vulnerable and are afraid that if they complain they will be disadvantaged in some way by either having their service removed or reduced. They remain silent for fear of reprisal or because they do not believe anything will change or be regarded as a trouble maker.

Encircle Housing's objective is to ensure its policy remains effective so that we can respond proactively to complaints.

### **Procedure**

If you have cause to complain Encircle Housing will aim to put things right as quickly as possible. We want to ensure that it is easy for people to tell us what has gone wrong and tell us how we can improve our service. All complaints will be treated positively and it is Encircle Housing's intention where possible to leave people feeling happy about their experience of making a complaint to us. To achieve this, we will:

- Make it easy for people to contact us by telephone, in writing, by fax, e-mail or in person
- Treat all complaints courteously, honestly, and openly
- Help someone make a complaint
- Treat all complaints with equal importance
- Deal with complaints as quickly as possible to ensure a speedy resolution to the problem
- Monitor complaints and learn from things that have gone wrong and improve our policies
- Publish the number, nature and outcomes of complaints we receive each year in our annual tenant survey report.

If you need help in making a complaint, please ask your Support Worker, a friend or relative or advocate, to assist you.

### **Stage 1**

You should address your complaint to Complaints Manager at Encircle Housing who will respond as follows:

You will receive:

- An acknowledgement within 7 working days
- A full response within 21 working days
- If the investigation is prolonged, you will be informed of the reason and when you can expect a reply.

At this stage, it is hoped that the complaint may be resolved as quickly as possible. The Complaints Manager (or equivalent) will arrange to visit you to establish the nature of the complaint and reassure you that your complaint is being taken seriously. It may be possible at this stage to resolve the problem without needing to carry out any further investigation. The Complaints Manager will then refer the complaint to the relevant person who will investigate the complaint.

All reports regarding the complaint will be recorded and monitored by Encircle Housing's Quality Monitoring Officer (or equivalent).

In the event of a complaint being made against the Complaints Manager, this will be forwarded to the Chief Executive of Encircle Housing to investigate the complaint.

### **Stage 2**

If you are unhappy with the way your complaint has been handled by the Complaints Manager you can request the Chief Executive to consider your complaint who may at their discretion either personally investigate the complaint or request another senior manager at Encircle Housing to carry out an independent investigation.

### **Stage 3**

If you are still not satisfied following the Chief Executive's involvement with your complaint, you may request for your complaint to be considered by Encircle Housing's Board of Directors. Three members of the Board will be asked to meet to look at the complaint and make a decision.

You have the right at any time during this process to contact the following outside bodies:

- Supporting People Team with your Local Authority
- Social Services Team with your Local Authority
- Care Quality Commission
- Homes and Communities Authority

Encircle Housing is happy to provide you with the contact information for any of the above bodies

### **Data Protection Act**

Encircle Housing as a data controller must comply with the Data Protection Act. In this respect when a person makes a complaint, the staff member dealing with the complaint must inform the person that their name and address is being taken to deal with the complaint under the Data Protection Act. However, their information will not be used for any other purpose.

### **Monitoring of Complaints**

All complaints are recorded and kept in a secure filing cabinet at Encircle Housing. A monitoring form stating the name and address of the complainant with details of the complaint, including action taken and any updates are recorded.

As part of Encircle Housing's Quality Monitoring process, complaints are regularly reviewed to ensure that the service offered to Encircle Housing tenant's/service users is continually improved.