

GOVERNANCE: Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy

Policy Statement

Haven Home Safe (HHS) values and respects the opinions of individuals, community members and other stakeholders, recognising their right to provide feedback or lodge complaints/appeals while being heard in an open and respectful manner. HHS provides clients and the broader community with opportunities to provide feedback on programs, services and processes, and ensures information about advocacy and support services is readily available.

Guiding Principles:

Feedback and complaints are a valuable source of information about the level of client¹ satisfaction with HHS' services and provide insights into how service delivery can be improved.

HHS will:

- Ensure all clients and other stakeholders are made aware of our feedback processes
- Encourage feedback from clients and stakeholders, respecting their rights and understanding their responsibilities
- Handle all feedback confidentially and respect the privacy of people providing feedback
- Record positive and negative feedback and respond in a way that enables us to improve our service delivery
- Ensure any client or stakeholder providing feedback will not suffer as a result
- Ensure that our feedback options are culturally appropriate and safe
- Accept feedback verbally, in writing, via our website or social media and will not treat feedback differently because of how it is received
- Investigate feedback, including complaints, in a fair and impartial way and follow the principles of natural justice
- Offer people alternate methods of providing feedback, such as referral to the Homelessness Advocacy Service, Housing Registrar or relevant funding bodies if they are dissatisfied with the way their feedback has been handled

Purpose

This Level 2 policy outlines how a complaint, compliment or suggestion can be made, and how to lodge an appeal if a client is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. HHS will uphold clients'¹ rights, safety and wellbeing and ensure that services are delivered and reviewed within the context of continuous quality improvement.

Scope

This *Policy* applies to all clients and stakeholders wishing to provide feedback on areas which can be improved, are working well, make a complaint or appeal decisions.

Definitions

Feedback can be a positive or negative expression of a person's experience of HHS' services. It can also take the form of opinions, suggestions or comments about areas for improvement made directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, to or about HHS, about our services or complaint handling system.

A **compliment** is positive feedback about the level of satisfaction with service delivery, and provides insight into what is working well, examples of good practice, and service components people find most valuable. It may also present opportunities for recognising the efforts of staff who have provided excellent service.

A **complaint** is expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us, our services, staff or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. This policy recognises two types of complaints - a **service delivery** complaint and a **neighbour** complaint:

- **Service delivery complaint** is a complaint about any service HHS offers and is something that HHS has direct control over. HHS is responsible for the behaviour that has caused the complaint. Resolving the issue is completely within our control.

¹ "Clients" may include any person who has applied or is applying for housing or support services from HHS. HHS explicitly recognises the role of client advocate whether statutory or voluntary.

Recommended by: CSBO

13 June 2023

Endorsed by: N/R

Scheduled review:

June 2025

Policy level: 2 Version: v7 Final

Risk Rating: MODERATE

This policy has been approved by Haven Executive.

Signed:

Name/Position: Trudi Ray, HCEO

DDMMYY

- **Neighbour Nuisance complaint** is a complaint about the way an HHS renter is behaving. A neighbour nuisance or antisocial behaviour complaint is not something HHS has direct control over.

(Complaints about the way the Neighbour Nuisance Complaints process has been managed by HHS would constitute a service delivery complaint.)

A **dispute** is an unresolved complaint escalated either within or outside of HHS.

An **appeal** is a procedure that allows a client to challenge a decision made by HHS. A client may also seek the support of HHS to lodge an appeal with other entities related to homelessness services or affordable housing.

Details:

Feedback methods

HHS will utilise a range of methods to obtain client feedback and inform service delivery and future planning, consistent with our privacy Policy.

Accessibility

Staff will actively assist people with a range of needs and support them to navigate the complaints process.

Anonymous Feedback

We accept and respond to anonymous complaints if enough information has been provided. We are unable to provide feedback on our response without contact details. It is not possible to respond directly to complaints made where no contact details are collected.

Complaint Handling at HHS

1. A complaint is received by HHS (either directly or via a 3rd party / agency)
2. Your complaint will be registered and acknowledged (when contact details are provided) within 5 business days, triaged and forwarded to the relevant section for investigation and a response prepared,
3. The response will be quality-checked,
4. If you provided contact details you will be informed of progress, and we will respond to you within 14 days and resolve the matter within 30 days, where possible.
5. If the matter is complex and cannot be resolved within 30 days, you will be advised and provided with progress reports until the matter is resolved and will be provided with contact details should you wish to have the matter reviewed by an external agency.

The following complaints MUST be reported to the relevant external body:

- *Privacy Breach – within one business day to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)*
- *Reportable Conduct as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 to the Commission for Children and Young People within three business days.*

How to Make a Complaint, Provide a Compliment or Make a Suggestion:

Mail: Haven Home Safe Feedback and Complaints,
PO Box 212, Bendigo Vic 3552

Telephone: 1300 428 364

Email: compliance@hhs.org.au

Social media: Google reviews, Facebook, Twitter

Internet: havenhomesafe.org.au/contact/feedback-complaints/

In person at one of our offices:

Bendigo: 10–16 Forest Street

Mildura: 143 Lime Avenue

Preston: 52 Mary Street

Geelong: 15 Yarra Street

Swan Hill: Shop 3, 194-208 Beverage St

Kyabram: 21-25 Lake Rd Kyabram

Echuca: 1/53 Haverfield St

- *Refer to Attachment (Making a complaint, providing a compliment or making a suggestion to Haven Home Safe) for details.*

END

ATTACHMENT

MAKING A COMPLAINT, PROVIDING A COMPLIMENT OR MAKING A SUGGESTION TO HAVEN HOME SAFE

Complaints or appeals about applications for social housing under the Victorian Housing Register (VHR)

As a provider of housing services, HHS participates in the VHR by:

- providing applicants with information about applying for social housing under the VHR,
- assisting applicants to make an application for social housing,
- submitting applications to Department of Families Fairness and Housing (DFFH) with a recommended outcome based on the VHR's eligibility criteria.

Where an applicant wants to make a complaint about the way in which HHS has provided service to them in making an application for social housing, or appeal a decision made by HHS in relation to the person's application for social housing, to...

- recommend or not recommend an application for approval,
- approve or not approve an application,
- remove an application from the register, or
- determine if an offer of social housing is a reasonable offer,

... an applicant should first ask that the complaint be reviewed, or the decision be reconsidered by HHS under the complaints and appeals procedure.

What to do if VHR applicants are not happy with HHS' complaint response?

Applicants for social housing who are unhappy with the resolution of a complaint under the complaints and appeals procedure may refer the complaint to the DFFH Housing Appeals Office. To make an appeal, you need to fill out an Appeal Application Form. You can get a form from:

- your local housing office
- Housing Appeals Office:
 - telephone (03) 9096 7426 or free call 1800 807 702 for country residents
 - [email housing appeals](mailto:housingappeals@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <housingappeals@dhhs.vic.gov.au>
 - the [Forms and guides page](http://www.housing.vic.gov.au/forms-guides) of the Housing website www.housing.vic.gov.au/forms-guides

Complaints about the Quality or Safety of NDIS Services or Supports

You can make a complaint to the NDIS Commission by:

- phoning 1800 035 544 (free call from landlines) or TTY 133 677. Interpreters can be arranged.
- National Relay Service and ask for 1800 035 544.
- Completing a [complaint contact form](#)

For information about making a complaint, visit the NDIS Commission website – [Making a complaint](http://ndiscommission.gov.au/about/making-complaint)
ndiscommission.gov.au/about/making-complaint

Appealing the outcome of a complaint

If the client is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they have a right to appeal the decision via the following methods:

1. Speak to the relevant HHS Manager
2. Speak to the Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer
3. Discuss your complaint with an advocacy service (see below):

Victorian Registrar of Housing Agencies – if you have lodged a complaint with HHS and it is not resolved after 30 days you can lodge a complaint with the Housing Registrar by:

- **Phone:** 03 7005 8984
- **Post:** Housing Registrar, GPO Box 4379, Melbourne, Victoria 3001
- **Internet:** Completing the online form available at: www.vic.gov.au/making-complaint-about-community-housing

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) - If you are unhappy with the outcome of the HHS complaint process, you may wish to complaint to DFFH by:

- **Phone:** 1300 884 706
- **Email:** feedback@dffh.vic.gov.au
- **Mail:** Complaints, GPO Box 4057, Melbourne, Victoria 3000.
- **Internet:** Completing the online form available at: feedback.dhhs.vic.gov.au/layout.html#/DFFH



Victorian Ombudsman - If you are unhappy with the outcome of the HHS complaint process, you may wish to complain to the Victorian Ombudsman by completing the online complaint form at www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au/make-a-complaint or by calling (03) 9613 6222 or 1800 806 314 in regional areas.

Services That Can Help You if You Want to Make a Complaint:

- Homelessness Advocacy Service – 1800 066 256 or 8415 6213
- Tenants Union of Victoria – 1800 068 860 – Social housing assistance line.
- Rights Information and Advocacy Centre Inc. (RIAC) Geelong, Bendigo and Mildura: Call 03 5222 5499
- Disability Services Commissioner: 1300 728 187
- Council to Homeless Persons: 1800 825 955
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (can help people up to the age of 25)
- Victoria Legal Aid – 1300 792 387