

RISK GOVERNANCE: Feedback - Enquiries, Compliments & Complaints Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Haven Home Safe (HHS) values and respects the opinions of individuals, community members and other stakeholders, recognising their right to make a complaint or provide feedback while being heard in an open and respectful manner. HHS provides Clients, Renters 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.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

This Level 2 Policy supports Clients and Renters to understand how HHS handles and responds to enquiries, compliments and complaints.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HHS will uphold Renters and Clients' rights, safety and wellbeing and ensure that services are delivered and reviewed within the context of continuous quality improvement. To achieve this, HHS will:

- Ensure all Clients, Renters and other stakeholders understand how to provide feedback
- Regularly monitor service delivery by creating opportunities for Clients and Renters to share feedback.
- Encourage feedback while respecting everyone's rights and responsibilities.
- Respect requests for feedback to be kept confidential, where permissible by law and the principles of natural justice allow
- Respond to feedback in ways that supports continuous service improvement.
- Ensure people can give feedback safely, without fear of reprisal or negative consequences.
- Provide feedback options that are culturally safe and appropriate.
- Accept feedback verbally, in writing, via our website or social media treating all feedback equally and recording both positive and negative feedback.
- Review negative feedback, fairly and impartially and according to natural justice.
- Respect the right of Clients and Renters to appeal decisions without recrimination, handling appeals consistently, transparently, and efficiently.
- Respect Renters' rights to make a complaint to the OHR.

SCOPE

This *Policy* applies to all Clients, Renters and stakeholders wishing to provide feedback on the service delivery of HHS. It also applies to all HHS staff responsible for receiving, managing, or responding to enquiries, compliments or complaints.

Recommended by: TOMI Working Group
Scheduled review:

Dec 2025
Dec 2027

Approved by: Executive
Policy level: 2 Version: v8

Risk Rating: **MODERATE**

This policy has been approved by Haven Home Safe CEO.

Signed:



Name/Position: Trudi Ray, CEO

15.12.2025

RESPONSIBILITIES

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|--------------------|--|
| CEO | Ensure Policy is in place and reviewed bi-annually |
| Executive | CBSO is the executive owner of this policy |
| Operations Leaders | Implement policy and ensure staff understand the policy |
| Operations staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand policy and related processes• Communicate with Renters and Clients to ensure clarity and manage expectations. |
| Compliance Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversee complaints investigation process, liaising with relevant Operations staff• Make recommendations to CBSO regarding any necessary actions• Communicate outcome to provider of feedback (as required) |

DEFINITIONS (Refer to ATTACHMENT)

DETAIL

Feedback

Feedback is a valuable source of information about Client, Renter, Renter advocate or stakeholder satisfaction with HHS' service delivery and may provide insight into how service delivery can be improved.

HHS utilises a range of methods to obtain Client and Renter feedback to inform service delivery and future planning, consistent with our *Privacy Policy* and the *HHS Client Voice Framework*.

Accessibility

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

HHS will provide access to interpreters (including Auslan), or translated materials, wherever possible. Easy English fact sheets will be provided for key policy areas. HHS will provide Renters or Clients with assistance to draft feedback, when requested.

HHS endeavours to provide culturally safe and trauma-informed options, particularly for First Nations people, people with a disability, or culturally diverse communities.

Anonymous Feedback

HHS accepts anonymous negative feedback, however, is unable to provide a response on the outcome of any investigation where no contact details are provided by the person giving the feedback.

Enquiries

Individuals who seek information about HHS' policies, services, or modes of service delivery are encouraged to submit an enquiry to their local office, or via the 'Contact Us' tab on the HHS website. HHS will endeavour to respond to the enquiry as quickly as reasonably practical.

Please note, the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) provisions do not apply to HHS.

Compliments

HHS staff are focussed on positive Client or Renter outcomes and appreciate compliments from service users. Compliments are reported to line managers, executive and to the Board of HHS.

Service Delivery Complaints

Any service user or stakeholder may choose to provide feedback about their experience with HHS' service delivery. However, issues raised will only trigger a complaint investigation when it meets the defined criteria. (Refer to Definitions in ATTACHMENT.)

A complainant is entitled to not provide their details; however, this will mean HHS is not able to inform them of progress or outcomes of an investigation into the complaint raised.

The complaint will be registered and acknowledged (when contact details are provided) within 5 business days, triaged and forwarded to the relevant section for consideration and a response to be prepared.

Renter Complaints

A Renter who is dissatisfied with HHS' handling of:

- Customer service
- Ending tenancies
- Housing allocation
- Neighbouring tenant
- Property maintenance (urgent / non-urgent repair)
- Rent
- Security or personal safety

or who believes HHS to be generally in breach of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic) the Renter should, in the first instance, raise the matter with HHS for a response by contacting their HHS Tenancy and Property Manager.

If HHS fails to respond within 30 days, or if the Renter remains dissatisfied with HHS' response, a Renter may lodge a complaint with the office of the Victorian Housing Registrar.

If a Renter wants to raise an issue about any other matter, they may provide feedback to their local HHS office, or via the 'Contact Us' tab on the HHS website (see below).

In all complaint and feedback handling, conflicts of interest will be declared and managed to ensure impartiality and fairness.

All feedback is recorded and if appropriate, investigated with a written response being provided to a complainant within 30 days (where possible). If it takes longer than 30 days to resolve a complaint, the complainant will be kept informed of progress of the investigation. All responses to complaints are checked for quality control and continuous improvement.

DFFH Client Incident Management System (CIMS)

Where a complaint involves client harm or a client safety incident, it will be managed under the Client Incident Management System (CIMS) framework in addition to this Policy.

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

Reportable Conduct as defined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.) to the Commission for Children and Young People within three business days.

Where to Provide Feedback:

Mail: Haven Home Safe Feedback,
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

RELATIVITIES

Relevant Legislation and Standards:

- *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* (Vic)
- *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* (Vic)
- *Social Services Regulations 2023* (Vic)
- *Social Services Standards 2024* (Vic)
- *Child and Well Being Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005/041>
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth)
- *National Disability Insurance Scheme (Complaints Management and Resolution) Rules 2018* (Cth)
- *Privacy and Data Collection Act 2014* (Vic)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)

Policies:

- Social Housing Rental Policy and SOP
- Affordable Housing Rental Policy and SOP
- Transitional Housing Management Policy and SOP
- Tenancy Management Policy and SOP
- Eligibility and Allocations Policy and SOP
- HHS Operational Instrument of Delegation
- Feedback – Enquiries, Compliments and Complaints SOP
- Privacy Policy and SOP
- Renter Appeals Policy

Advocacy and support:

- Tenancy Dispute
Consumer Affairs
Victoria GPO Box 123 Melbourne Vic 3001
Phone 1300 40 43 19

- *For information on residential disputes:*
Residential accommodation complaint - Consumer Affairs
Victoria

- Specialist Disability Accommodation rental agreements: Complaints in SDA - Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission – 1300 891 848
- 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

END

➤ ATTACHMENT - Definitions

ATTACHMENT

DEFINITIONS

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| Appeal | is a procedure that allows a Renter to seek a review of a first instance decision made by HHS. |
| Client | Is a person who seeks support / is being supported because they are either homeless, or at risk of homelessness |
| Complaint: | is an expression of dissatisfaction made to or about us by a Renter or Client about our services or staff where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. This policy recognises three types of Complaints - a Renter Complaint, a Service Delivery Complaint and a Neighbour Complaint: |
| 1. Renter Complaint | is a complaint lodged by a Renter in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service • Ending tenancies • Housing allocation • Neighbouring tenant • Property maintenance (urgent or non-urgent repair) • Rent (increases without the lawful notice) • Bond related disputes • Entry to the property by landlord without required notice |
| 2. Service Delivery Complaint | is a Complaint about a service HHS offers and is something that HHS has control over or where HHS is responsible for the behaviour that has caused the Complaint. Resolving the issue is generally within HHS' control. Under the <i>Housing Act 1983 (Vic)</i> and performance standards for registered housing agencies a Service Delivery Complaint relates to how HHS or its staff deliver services, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance of HHS in providing housing services. • Customer service and responsiveness. • Engagement with Renters or Clients. • Fairness and transparency in dealings. |
| <p><i>A service delivery complaint is not:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>a tenancy dispute under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) - (RTA tenancy matters must be dealt with under the Act or through VCAT.), or</i> • <i>a decision outcome (e.g. rent determination, eligibility assessment).</i> | |
| 3. Neighbour Nuisance Complaint | is a Complaint about the way a Renter in an HHS owned or managed property is behaving. A Neighbour Nuisance or antisocial behaviour Complaint is not something HHS has direct control over. |
| <i>(Complaints about the way the Neighbour Nuisance Complaints process has been managed by HHS is a service delivery complaint.)</i> | |
| Compliment | is positive feedback about 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. |
| Dispute | is an unresolved Complaint escalated either within or outside of HHS. |
| Enquiry | is a request for information about HHS, our services offered, or our delivery of services. |
| False, Misleading or Deceptive Conduct | False, Misleading or Deceptive Conduct relates to claims made about products or services that are not accurate, true or based on reasonable grounds to the extent protected by Australian Consumer Law (ACL). |
| Feedback | is either a positive or negative expression of a person's experience of HHS' service delivery. It can also take the form of opinions, suggestions or comments about areas for improvement about HHS' service delivery. |
| Renter | A renter is a person named on a current lease for a property owned or managed by HHS. |
| Statutory Obligations | Statutory Obligations refer to requirements under State or Federal legislation related to tenancy management for residential properties in Victoria. |
| Unconscionable Conduct | Unconscionable conduct is behaviour so harsh that it goes against good conscience. Under consumer law, businesses must not act unconscionably towards consumers or other businesses. (<i>Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)</i> Schedule 2) to the extent protected by Australian Consumer Law (ACL). |