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ODU-DUA HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Complaints Policy & Procedure

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1 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 At Odu-Dua Housing Association we are committed to providing a high quality service in all areas of our work.
- 1.2 We are determined to always act in a fair, helpful and efficient manner but some of the time, we get things wrong. If this happens we want to have the opportunity to put it right. We welcome complaints and consider them an important source of information for improving our services.
- 1.3 When dealing with a complaint, we will:
 - a) Make it easy for complaints to be made;
 - b) Respond promptly to the complaint;
 - c) Sort out the problem efficiently and fairly;
 - d) Be fair, polite and helpful;
 - e) Help those with difficulties to fill in the complaints form;
 - f) Provide an up to date progress report on each complaint;
 - g) Treat all complaints confidentially;
 - h) Give all complainants the right to a second opinion.

2 POLICY

2.1 Who can make a complaint?

Any of the following people can make a complaint:

- a) Anyone living in a property owned or managed by us, or anyone acting on his or her behalf and with his/her consent;
- b) Anyone who wants to receive a service from us can also complain, for example, someone applying for housing;
- c) People who live next door to one of our properties can complain about the behaviour of our tenants and their visitors, and about any damage caused to their property by lack of repair to our property;
- d) We will not consider complaints about the fact that we own or lease a property in a particular area or street.

2.2 What can I complain about?

The rights and entitlements of an Odu-Dua tenant are explained in the Tenants' Handbook. The section entitled 'Repairs, Improvements and Decorations' summarises the level of support tenants can expect from Odu-Dua. This complaints procedure is intended for those times when you feel Odu-Dua has failed to deliver what we promised. You may wish to complain because:

- a) We have failed to carry out our legal duties as your landlord;
- b) We failed to take action after you first contacted us;
- c) You feel that our policies or practices are unfair;
- d) You believe that we have not carried out our own rules properly or have failed to act efficiently in delivering a service;
- e) You feel that a member of staff has behaved improperly or has been impolite.

2.3 What issues are not covered by this procedure?

- a) Chasing repairs request or initially reporting a problem with your neighbours. For repairs enquiries, please contact the Repairs Officer on 020 7625 1799. For anti-social behaviour complaints, please contact the Housing Officer on 020 7625 1799;
- b) Anything that happened over a year ago, unless you have only become aware of the situation;
- c) Matters currently being dealt with by the Ombudsman, or where legal action has begun;

2.4 Who do I complain to?

If you are not satisfied with a particular service you should contact the relevant Department Head who will discuss with you how we can deal with your complaint.

Complaints mail address:	Complaints Odu-Dua Housing Assoc. 84 - 88 Kingsgate Road London NW6 4LA
Complaints Department Heads:	Customer Services Officer Finance Officer Housing Officer Repairs Officer
Complaints telephone number:	020 7625 1799
Complaints e-mail address:	admin@odu-dua.org

3 PROCEDURE

3.1 How do I complain?

It is important that you follow the steps outlined below. Our procedure has been designed to ensure that complaints are dealt with as quickly as possible. It is important that you tell us what you want us to do to put things right.

3.2 The First Steps – Informal Complaint

Before making a formal complaint you should discuss the matter with the appropriate Department Head. At this stage we will consider the matter as an informal complaint and try to put it right at this first step. In most cases, this will be the quickest way to resolve issues and it will help you to avoid delays in us dealing with your enquiry or complaint.

If the matter is not resolved at this first step, you can ask for the matter to be considered as a Formal Complaint: Stage 1.

3.3 Formal Complaint: Stage 1

At this stage, your complaint will be dealt with by the Operations Manager (OM) and we suggest that you put your complaint in writing. To make the complaint you can complete the Complaints Report Form at Appendix 1 which is designed to collect all the relevant information or, alternatively, you can send a letter or an email.

If you have any difficulties completing the form, a member of staff will assist you. Verbal complaints can also be made directly to staff who will record the content of any telephone call or discussion on a Complaints Report Form for your subsequent signature.

You should make it clear what your complaint is about and what you would like Odu-Dua to do to resolve it.

Odu-Dua will **not** consider complaints at Stage 1 if:

- a) You have not tried to resolve the matter as outlined in the section 'The First Steps – Informal Complaint';
- b) Legal proceedings have commenced or are about to commence;
- c) The complaint is over a year old, unless you have only recently become aware of the situation;
- d) The complaint uses abusive language;
- e) The complaint covers repeat issues that have already been addressed.

Once your Stage 1 complaint has been received the OM will formally respond to your complaint within a reasonable time, depending on the

nature and complexity of the issue/s you raise. This will usually be within 15 working days but, should it take longer, we will write to you and inform you of the reasons for the delay and when you should receive a full reply. The OM may wish to meet you in the office or in your home to discuss the matter further. We hope the matter will be resolved at this stage.

If the matter is not resolved at this stage, you can ask for it to be considered as a Formal Complaint: Stage 2 which gives you the right to put your case to the Chief Executive of Odu-Dua.

3.4 Formal Complaint: Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with the response you received at Stage 1 you must contact the OM and give full reasons why you wish to proceed to Stage 2.

In order for your complaint to be moved to Stage 2, you must make your request within 10 working days of receiving the formal response provided at Stage 1.

You have the right to be accompanied by a friend, family member or advocate to any meeting with the Chief Executive. We will inform you when and where the meeting with the Chief Executive will take place.

The Chief Executive's decision is binding upon Odu-Dua and we will comply with any recommendations. You will normally be informed of this decision within 20 working days of your meeting with the Chief Executive. However, should it take longer, we will write to you and inform you of the reasons for the delay and when you should receive a full reply.

3.5 What happens next?

We will always provide you with a full written explanation of how and why a decision has been reached. Where there has been a service failure, in part or in full, you will also receive a written apology. Depending on the nature of the complaint, we may also deliver the service/s we failed to provide or give financial compensation. If appropriate, we may also review our procedures so that the same mistake does not happen again. Even if all our procedures have been followed correctly we will still try to come to an agreement with you.

3.6 The Housing Ombudsman

Odu-Dua's internal complaints procedure ends with the decision of the Chief Executive. If you remain dissatisfied with the response received you may consider taking your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Please be aware that the Ombudsman will only consider complaints that have been investigated through the above stages.

To have your complaint examined by the Housing Ombudsman Service you need to send it to the below address:

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN

Tel: 020 7421 3800

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Odu-Dua supports the Ombudsman's role, and is committed to fully co-operating with the Ombudsman.

Appendix 1



ODU-DUA HOUSING ASSOCIATION COMPLAINTS REPORT FORM

Please be assured that we treat all complaints in confidence.
We cannot however deal with anonymous complaints.

Your name	_____
Your address	_____ _____ _____
Telephone Number	_____ Mobile _____
Email Address	_____

Please place tick the appropriate box:

Are you a? Resident Former Resident Applicant for Housing
 Non Resident Other

If other, please state _____

Date/s when event occurred _____

What do you think Odu-Dua did wrong or failed to do?

If you need more space, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form.

If you have suffered harm, loss, damage or inconvenience, please give details.

If you need more space, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form.

Have you taken action so far or complained to anybody else?

Yes No

If yes, please give details of who you spoke to and what happened.

Name of the person/s you spoke to _____

What happened?

If you need more space, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this form.

How would you like Odu-Dua to resolve the complaint?

Signed _____ Date _____