

Rapport

H O U S I N G & C A R E

How to Make a Complaint



Who can use the Complaints Procedure?

The following list is comprised of persons who have a right to complain to Rapport Housing & Care should they so wish, however, the organisation will not discuss matters relating to a specific individual without their expressed consent, or that of any person acting on their behalf in an official capacity.

- ◆ Residents/ tenants/service users;
- ◆ Staff;
- ◆ Regulators;
- ◆ Relatives;
- ◆ Nominated persons;
- ◆ Other partner agencies including those persons/agencies purchasing our services;
- ◆ Those persons applying to use our services;
- ◆ Members of the public.
- ◆ MPs
- ◆ Local councillors

We will also accept complaints made by a person acting on behalf of people we support who have a relevant Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or have Court of Protection Deputyship.

How do I Make a Complaint?

If you think we have not provided a good service, we can often resolve problems straight away, however, if we can't solve your problem quickly, we will ensure that your complaint is taken forward as a formal complaint.

You can make a complaint by phone, in writing (letter or email), in person, or you can pick up and complete one of our leaflets that can be found in the foyer of our services. You will find our contact details at the back of this leaflet.

On receipt of your complaint, we will log your concerns and acknowledge this in writing within *five working days*.

If the complaint is regarding a repair or maintenance issue, we will record this as a maintenance request, rather than a complaint.

Complaint Investigations

When we receive a complaint, one of our staff will take responsibility for investigating your concerns and will be the point of contact for you. They will contact you to:

- ◆ Listen and talk to you about your complaint or problem;
- ◆ Discuss what can be done to try and resolve it for you;
- ◆ Keep in touch with you during the investigation if they need to clarify any information or ask you questions.

Following an investigation into your complaint you will be sent a final outcome response; this letter will tell you how we have responded to your complaint and whether any further action will be taken. Please note, our policy states that where possible and practicable, a response will be provided within **28 working days**. If we need longer to fully investigate your complaint, we will write to you and tell you why.

As part of your final outcome response letter you will be given the opportunity to appeal against the outcome. The final outcome response letter will clearly identify the person to whom you should make the appeal.

You should note that once the final outcome response letter is sent, any further issues relating to your complaint need to be taken up through the appeal process.

Sometimes we have to follow legal rules in addition to our policies and if this is the case with your complaint, we will ensure that we talk to you about the reasons why, but in every case we will always aim to be fair.

The Duty of Candour

We will comply with the Duty of Candour in all of our Care Quality Commission (CQC) registered services, this means that we will be open and honest with people when things go wrong and where any harm to a service user results from their care or treatment.

Review of Your Complaint (Appeal Process)

The aim of our complaints procedure is to ensure that we try to resolve your complaint as efficiently and effectively as possible.

If, following receipt of your final outcome response letter, you feel that we have not resolved your complaint, you can ask for an appeal. The appeal

must be made within *seven working days* of receiving your final outcome response letter. The final outcome response letter will clearly identify the person to whom you should make the appeal.

It is important that you clearly state the reasons why you wish to make an appeal and this will ensure the process runs smoothly. At the appeal stage you cannot introduce any new complaint, concern or issue. If you wish to raise a new concern or issue you will need to make a new complaint. You can only appeal against the decision made in regards to your original complaint.

The appeals process is the final stage of Rapport Housing & Care's complaints procedure.

Taking Your Complaint Further

If after you have had your appeal considered you still remain dissatisfied with the response given to your complaint, you can ask a 'designated person' from outside Rapport Housing & Care to look at your complaint. A designated person can be:

- ◆ A member of Parliament;
- ◆ A local councillor;

A designated person can try and resolve your complaint or they can refer it to another organisation to consider. Who they can refer your complaint to will depend upon which of our services it relates to as set out below.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (for our care home and domiciliary care services only).

If you are not satisfied with the way in which Rapport Housing & Care has dealt with your complaint or the decision made, after you have been through our full complaints procedure then you have the right to take your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigate all complaints about adult care services. It does not matter if the care is provided by a council or paid for yourself.

They will only investigate your complaint after it has been through our internal complaints procedure.

You can find further information on how to refer your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman by calling them on 0300 061 0614 or by visiting their website at www.lgo.org.uk.

Housing Ombudsman (for our supported and extra care housing services only)

Rapport Housing & Care is a registered provider (RP) of housing (sometimes also known as a housing association), registered with the Independent Housing Ombudsman Service. If your complaint relates to one of our supported or extra care housing services, then you can also refer it to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Housing Ombudsman will only investigate your complaint after it has been through our internal complaints procedure. If you have decided not to contact a designated person you can go directly to the Housing Ombudsman eight weeks after you have received our final response to your appeal.

You can find further information on how to refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman by calling them on 0300 111 3000 or by visiting their website at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) (for our care homes and domiciliary care services only)

The CQC are responsible for checking that every care provider that is registered with them meets their Fundamental Standards. However, the duties given to the CQC by Parliament do not include dealing with individual complaints about providers' services.

The only exception to this is in relation to complaints from people whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act, or their representatives, about the way staff have used their powers under the Act.

The CQC can still be contacted if a person feels that they are not satisfied about the care they are receiving. This is because they can use the information when they are looking at individual services to make sure they are meeting their Fundamental Standards. If services are found not to meet these standards, the CQC can use their legal powers to ensure improvements are made.

Duty of Care

All complaints will be given equal consideration and investigation, however under multiple statutory responsibilities Rapport Housing & Care has a duty to protect its employees from verbal abuse and disrespectful behaviour by third parties, therefore our staff will not be expected to tolerate any abusive or threatening behaviour.

Vexatious Complainant Behaviour

The organisation acknowledges that we will not always get things right and the complaints policy and procedure is there to help us improve our services. We are committed to dealing with all complaints effectively, consistently and fairly.

In doing so, we do not usually limit the contact that a complainant has with the organisation. However, there are a small number of complainants who, because of their behaviour, hinder the organisation in delivering the services we provide to them or others. We refer to such behaviour as vexatious complainant behaviour.

When a complainant is being unreasonable, we may decide to designate their behaviour as vexatious, and restrict their contact with the organisation. The decision to designate a complainant's behaviour as vexatious will be taken by the relevant head of service and the director of operations.

In all cases, we will write to the complainant to tell them why we believe their behaviour is vexatious, what action we are taking and the duration of that action. We will also tell them how they can challenge the decision if they disagree with it.



Useful Contacts

Rapport Housing & Care Head Office
The Old Wharf
Station Road, Cuxton
Kent
ME2 1AB
Tel: 01634 723007

The Care Quality Commission (CQC)
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA
Tel: 03000 616161

A full copy of our complaints policy can be made available upon request





Registered Office

Rapport Housing & Care
The Old Wharf, Station Road
Cuxton, Rochester
Kent
ME2 1AB

Tel: 01634 723007

Rapport Housing & Care is a registered charity 254140, Housing Association H2362, Company 908333. If you require this information in a different format, please email media@rapporthc.co.uk.