

Complaints & Appeals Procedure

1. Purpose

To provide clear instruction to Centacare Evolve Housing workers regarding the procedure required to be followed in the unfortunate event that we have a complaint, appeal or dispute raised regarding the provision of our services.

Centacare Evolve Housing employees are required to respond to feedback, suggestions and complaints according to the principles and guidelines outlined in this procedure.

We will:

- make sure that people know how to contact us to tell us what they think;
- listen to what they have to say;
- do our best to understand stated concerns or issues;
- investigate any concerns raised in a fair and impartial manner;
- do our best to resolve the issue or fix the problem, although this may not always be possible;
- acknowledge any mistakes or errors we have made;
- provide clear explanation for all our decisions, unless limited by law;
- provide a pathway to appeal any decisions we have made.

The following will guide our response, handling and management of all complaint to Centacare Evolve Housing:

- All feedback will be received respectfully;
- All feedback will be acknowledged and managed to specific, agreed and published timelines;
- All decisions will be explained clearly.

2. How people can provide feedback

People can provide feedback in person at reception, by phone, website, mail, email or to Centacare Evolve Housing employee.

3. What people can expect from us when lodging a complaint

We will:

- listen to the complaint and attempt to resolve the matter immediately if possible;
- investigate all complaints in a timely manner;
- provide a response to the complainant at the conclusion of our investigation of the complaint.

We expect:

- you talk to our staff respectfully;
- you provide us with as much information about the complaint as possible;
- you let us know of any special needs or if extra help is needed in understanding or accessing our complaints service.

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4. Timeframes

Timeframes for acknowledging complaints:

- Phone - 1 business day
- Email or letter - 1 business day
- Letter (no phone number provided) - 5 business days

Where possible complaints will be rectified immediately. If not, we discuss a suitable timeframe with you depending on the nature of your complaint. However, we would expect all complaints to be resolved within two weeks.

In the unlikely event that we are not in a position to fully resolve your complaint within this timeframe, we will contact you to discuss this further.

5. Record Keeping

All feedback is recorded in our tenant management system.

6. Responses and Remedies

Possible responses and remedies include:

- an explanation;
- an acknowledgement of each parties perspective and agreement on ways to manage differences;
- an apology or expression of regret;
- an admission of fault;
- a change of decision;
- a change of policy, procedure or practice;
- agreement on what constitutes acceptable behaviour;
- an undertaking that unacceptable behaviour will change.

7. Appeals

There may be occasions where you wish to appeal the decision that was made in relation to your complaint. Appeals can be lodged with the General Manager of Centacare Evolve Housing by email or in writing. In order to be valid, appeals need to be lodged within 2 weeks from the date that the original decision was communicated to you.

Appeals will be handled internally by our senior management team. A new determination can be made when it is found that one or more of the following apply:

- the initial decision was based on an error;
- the initial decision was based on incomplete information;
- the initial decision was based on an incorrect interpretation of the information;
- the initial decision was contrary to higher principles, i.e. human rights, welfare of the child etc.;
- there were highly unusual circumstances;
- that new information is now available that was not available at the time the initial decision was made;
- there is provision for discretion, which had not been exercised.

Results of the appeal will be communicated within one week unless otherwise agreed.

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8. External appeals process

If the internal processes have been exhausted and you wish to make a further appeal you may contact:

- The Tasmanian Ombudsman’s office, an independent office that will review appeals and determine the final outcome regarding your complaint.
- Tenants Union of Tasmania, a specialist community legal centre for residential tenants.
- Your local member for parliament or
- The Minister for Housing

Contact details for the Ombudsman and Tenants Union can be found at the end of this document. A web search will find details of current Members of Parliament and Ministers.

We can assist with making these enquiries if needed.

9. Associated Documents:

- Complaints & Appeals Procedure
- Establishing & Maintaining Tenancies Policy
- Tenant Handbook

10. Compliance with this procedure

This Complaints and Appeals procedure should be implemented as described, management approval should be sought prior to any deviation from this procedure.

11. Procedure Review

This Procedure is subject to change from time to time at the discretion of Centacare Evolve Housing.

Ombudsman Tasmania Address: Level 6/86 Collins St, Hobart TAS 7000 Phone: 1800 001 170	Tenants Union of Tasmania Address: 166 Macquarie St, Hobart TAS 7000 Phone: (03) 6223 2641
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