

Complaints & Appeals Procedure Policy		Tier: Procedure	
		Revision: 2.0	Date Approved / Effective: 16/03/2023
Prepared by: Manager Business Performance	Reviewed by: GM Housing Operations	Approved by: Executive Management Team	Review Date: 16/03/2026

1. Purpose

To provide guidance on the process of lodging a complaint, and the subsequent steps for review, response and appeals.

2. Scope

All employees of Centacare Evolve Housing are responsible for complying with the Procedure.

3. Definitions

Worker	Any person undertaking work activities for Centacare Evolve Housing inclusive of Employees, Board Members, Contractors and Volunteers.
Complaint	Complaints relate to dissatisfaction with an area of service delivery, over which we have direct control. Generally, complaints relate to the manner in which we provided the service to you, by a staff member, contractor or third party working on our behalf.
Appeals	Appeals relate to a tenant or service user's dissatisfaction about the outcome of a complaint made to us.

Procedure

1. Providing feedback

Centacare Evolve Housing encourages its tenants and other community members or services to provide feedback. We recognise that feedback is an important part of developing and improving our service and our relationships. Anyone can provide feedback about Centacare Evolve Housing in person at reception, by phone, website, mail, email or to any Centacare Evolve Housing worker. Feedback can be in the form of compliments, complaints, suggestions or general comment. This procedure is focussed on the management of complaints.

2. When receiving a complaint.

Centacare Evolve Housing will:

- review 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.

Centacare Evolve Housing expects complainants to:

- interact with our staff respectfully;
- provide us with as much information about the complaint as possible;
- let us know of any special needs or extra help that is needed to understand or access our complaints process.

3. Timeframes.

When we receive a complaint, we aim to acknowledge receipt of the complaint within the following timeframes:

- Phone: Two business days
- Email or letter (if phone number is provided): Two business days
- Letter (if no phone number is provided): Five business days

Where possible, complaints will be rectified immediately. If not, we discuss a suitable timeframe with the complainant depending on the nature of the complaint. However, we aim to complete the complaint response process within two weeks. In the unlikely event that we are not in a position to fully respond to a complaint within this timeframe, we will contact the complainant to discuss.

4. Record keeping.

All feedback is recorded electronically and treated in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

5. Types of responses & resolutions.

Possible complaint responses and resolutions include:

- an explanation;
- an acknowledgement of each party's 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 behavior or practice;
- an undertaking that unacceptable behavior or practice will change.

6. Appeals

There may be occasions where a complainant wishes to appeal a decision that was made in relation to their complaint. Appeals can be lodged with the General Manager, Housing Operations by email or in writing. In order to be considered, appeals need to be lodged within two weeks of the date that the original decision was communicated. 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 (e.g. human rights, client/child welfare);
- there were highly unusual circumstances;
- new information is available that was not available at the time the initial decision was made;
- discretion can be applied to change the original decision.

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

7. External appeals process

If the internal processes have been exhausted and the complainant wishes to make a further appeal they will need to pursue an appeal through an external avenue – examples include:

- The Tasmanian Ombudsman;
- The Residential Tenancy Commissioner
- The Tenants Union of Tasmania;
- A member of parliament; or
- The Office of the Minister for Housing.

Centacare Evolve Housing can help complainants find contact details for appeals or refer them to an advocacy organisation for support.

Associated Documents:

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