

# Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy

Originator:	Regulatory Compliance Team
Executive Management Team Approval Date:	May 2026
Review date:	May 2027

1	Introduction
1.1	One Vision Housing (OVH) is committed to providing quality, responsive and timely services that consistently meet or exceed our customers' expectations. The customer is at the heart of everything we do, and we use all forms of customer feedback to continuously improve the quality of the services that we provide. OVH's approach to this is aligned to the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Code and OVH's adopted code of governance.
1.2	At OVH we realise that despite our best efforts, we may not always get things right for our customers. When this happens, we will act quickly to resolve a problem to the customer's satisfaction, keep the customer informed of our actions, advise of how we will learn from the experience and do things differently to prevent it happening again.
1.3	OVH also recognise that occasionally, customers may disagree with decisions that OVH make. To ensure fairness, we operate an appeals process to allow customers to challenge decisions and request they are reconsidered.
1.4	In addition to complaints and appeals the scope of this Policy also takes account of the ways in which OVH deals with compliments, suggestions and surveys as valuable forms of customer feedback.
1.5	<p>The application of this Policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England adopted by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, as outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard states that Registered Providers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Registered providers must ensure their approach to handling complaints is simple, accessible and publicised</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Registered providers must provide accessible information to tenants about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How tenants can make a complaint about their registered provider</li> <li>○ The registered provider's complaints policy and complaints handling process</li> <li>○ What tenants can do if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of a complaint or how a complaint was handled, and</li> <li>○ The type of complaints received and how they have learnt from complaints to continuously improve services</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- The Tenancy Standard states that in relation to Allocations and Mutual Exchanges, Registered Providers must:
  - Registered providers must have a fair, reasonable, simple and accessible appeals process for allocation decisions

## 1.6 Definitions

1.6.1 For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions will apply:

- **Complaint** – will be defined as ‘An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents’
- **Appeal** – will be defined as ‘a disagreement with a decision we have made in line with our published policies or procedures’
  - General Appeal – this is an appeal about general service provision where a decision has been made that the customer does not agree with
  - Statutory Appeal – this is where the right to appeal is outlined in legislation or regulation – details given in Section 3.4
- **Request for Service** – will be defined as a request to OVH to perform one or more of its landlord functions e.g. carrying out a repair or other function in connection with tenancy / estate management. When received, these will not be classed as complaints unless also accompanied by an expression of dissatisfaction (see definition of complaint above)
- **Feedback** – will be defined as ‘any method whereby customers can express their views on how OVH delivers its services’

## 1.7 Access and Communication

1.7.1 OVH is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone. OVH will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for OVH or use its services.

1.7.2 In line with the Mental Capacity Act, OVH will assume that customers have capacity to understand information given to them. Where it is suspected that customers lack capacity to understand, OVH will request an assessment by a professional practitioner and look to provide the appropriate support where capacity is deemed to be insufficient.

1.7.3 Working with our customers we have established a Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure we make best use of every customer interaction to meet customers’ needs in our service delivery and ensure this information is kept up to date.

## 1.8 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

1.8.1 OVH is committed to fairness and equality for all customers, colleagues, and stakeholders.

1.8.2 OVH’s approach to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) goes beyond legal or statutory obligations, however, OVH will meet or exceed its legal requirements as outlined in the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. This policy also demonstrates how OVH will meet the requirements of Public Sector Equality Duties, which it has chosen to adopt and implement as a matter of good practice rather than as a legal obligation.

1.8.3	OVH is fully committed to eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination. Hate Crime, Harassment, and Bullying will also not be tolerated, and take proactive steps to prevent such behaviours.
1.8.4	<p>It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly based on the following protected characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Gender identity, or gender reassignment status</li> <li>• Race, racial group, ethnic or national origin, or nationality</li> <li>• Religion or belief</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Marriage or civil partnership status</li> <li>• Pregnancy or maternity</li> </ul>
1.8.5	OVH are also committed to ensuring that individuals are not treated less favourably due to their social, economic, or cultural backgrounds, as well as specific medical conditions as defined in the Equality Act.
1.8.6	OVH regularly review policies and practices to ensure they reflect its commitment to equality and diversity.
1.9	<p>The Policy should be read in conjunction with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OVH Compensation Policy</li> <li>• The OVH Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustment Policy</li> <li>• The OVH Starter Tenancy Policy</li> <li>• The OVH Tenancy Transfer, Succession and Mutual Exchange Policy</li> <li>• The Property Pool Plus (Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Policy)</li> <li>• The OVH Unacceptable Behaviour Policy</li> </ul>

<b>2</b>	<b>Statement of Intent</b>
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2.1	With strategic direction from the Board and Executive Management Team, OVH provide a positive approach to complaints, appeals and all forms of customer feedback. OVH is committed to using this information to deliver consistently excellent customer services. In support of this, OVH Board have a designated Board Member to oversee its strategic approach to Complaints Management, known as ‘Member Responsible for Complaints’.
2.2	<p>OVH will ensure it provides complaints, appeals and feedback opportunities that are easy to understand and easy to access for all customers. OVH will facilitate this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring customers can provide complaints, appeals and feedback in a variety of ways including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ contact over the phone – <b>0300 365 1111</b></li> <li>○ in person with any OVH staff member,</li> <li>○ on-line using the Customer Portal Facility – <b>My Account</b> via the OVH website - <a href="https://my-account.sovini.co.uk/user/login">https://my-account.sovini.co.uk/user/login</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- via email - [enquiries@ovh.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ovh.org.uk)
- or in writing - One Vision Housing, PO Box 891, Orpington, BR6 1LY
- Involving customers in designing and approving all information on complaints, appeals and feedback to ensure it is jargon free and easy to understand
- Making relevant information available in alternative languages and formats on request and meeting all requests for 'reasonable adjustments' – (In line with the OVH Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustment Policy')
- Ensuring customers receive support from OVH staff, or via working in partnership with community support agencies and advocacy groups
- Analysing complaints, appeals and feedback information against our known customer profile information and the diversity of the community where OVH operates, to break down any barriers that may prevent any group from accessing the services
- Resolving complaints to customers' satisfaction, efficiently and learning from this to improve customer service

2.3

### Resources

2.3.1

OVH will ensure there are appropriate resources available to gather, analyse and act upon complaints, appeals and customer feedback intelligence. This aim will be achieved by:

- Ensuring staff are trained and regularly assessed in complaints, appeals and feedback handling, know how to access relevant procedures, provide prompt, consistent and direct responses to customers and take ownership of issues at the first point of contact
- Ensuring the organisation's performance management framework uses complaints, appeals and customer feedback information to drive service improvement
- Having in place a dedicated Customer Complaints Co-ordinator with responsibility for complaints handling, liaison as required with the Housing Ombudsman and access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints

2.4

### Monitoring

2.4.1

OVH will review and continuously monitor service standards with its customers for the ways in which it responds to complaints, appeals and feedback. To achieve this aim OVH will:

- Provide intelligence to our Investigating Officers, Managers, involved tenants and Board to show trends, responses provided and actions taken to improve services
- Use our Tenants Inspectors to audit the quality of case handling
- Set challenging but realistic targets with our customers and benchmark our performance against our peers
- Regularly review best practice in complaints, appeals and feedback handling and adopt improved ways of working identified as being beneficial to OVH, including review and learning of case studies published by the Housing Ombudsman
- Publish our performance, satisfaction and lessons learnt from complaints and feedback handling to our customers
- Carry out a self-assessment against the 'Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code' and report findings to Board every 12 months / publish this report and the Boards response to it on the OVH Website

**3**

**Policy**

3.1 OVH has merged its Policy response for complaints, appeals and general customer feedback into one Policy document given the similarities that exist in the Stages of investigation, timescales for customer response and intention to use these forms of feedback to drive continuous improvement in service delivery.

3.1.1 Listed below, at 3.1.4, are issues that are common to OVH’s approach to both the investigation and response to complaints and general appeals. Where there are differences in response these are clearly indicated.

3.1.2 If for any reason OVH are not able to resolve an issue to a customer’s satisfaction at the first point of contact or they are not satisfied with a decision that OVH has made in line with its published policies, customers may request that it is dealt with through the internal investigation process (see 3.1.4 below).

3.1.3 OVH will make a decision on the most appropriate channel to deal with the issue, based on the information supplied, and will advise the customer in the acknowledgement contact or letter.

3.1.4 **Internal Complaint and General Appeal Investigation Stages**

	Complaints	General Appeals
<b>Stage One</b>	<p>The complaint will be acknowledged, defined and logged within Five working days and the customer will be advised who will be investigating. At the point of reporting or on first contact with the customer when acknowledging or investigating a complaint, OVH will, if possible, try to determine with the customer what outcome they would like to see to resolve the complaint satisfactorily.</p> <p>The investigating officer will endeavor to make contact with the customer(s) or their advocate (where OVH have clear consent from customer(s) to deal with a third party) to obtain more details.</p> <p>A full written response will be provided within Ten working days of the complaint being acknowledged (unless the investigation requires more time, in which case the customer(s) will be advised of the revised timescale and the details why this is necessary). In most cases OVH will not unreasonably extend a stage One</p>	<p>Procedure and timescales for response to general appeals is the same as Stage One for complaints.</p> <p>Common factors which may form grounds for general appeals include (but are not exclusive of) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where OVH has not taken into account an individual or groups circumstances or needs when making decisions</li> <li>• Where OVH have not considered or had access to all relevant information</li> <li>• Where OVH has acted outside its stated policies</li> <li>• Where an individual or group is unfairly disadvantaged in any way as a result of decisions made</li> </ul> <p>Non-exhaustive examples of grounds for general appeal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeals against ineligibility for Independent Living services following needs and risk assessment</li> </ul>

	<p>complaint beyond a further Ten working days for initial response and in all cases where extensions are necessary, the customer will be provided with the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman).</p> <p>The customer(s) will receive a letter outlining OVH's response and any actions / timescales that will apply to remedy the complaint, if applicable</p> <p>(Note – if an element of a complaint is in relation to building or fire safety issues in OVH's high rise properties – this element will be passed to the Building Safety and Compliance Team to investigate and respond, in line with the timescales outlined above and below – see the OVH Mandatory Occurrence Reporting Policy for further details. If the complaint is in relation to heat networks within OVH properties customers will be advised they can escalate the complaint to the Energy Ombudsman after eight weeks, if not satisfied with OVH's response or a deadlock letter has been issued by OVH. They will also be advised they may approach the Citizens Advice service for advocacy support at any time, in relation to heat network complaints</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refusal of aids and adaptations requests</li> <li>• Investment works decisions</li> <li>• Decisions on Right to Buy or Right to Acquire applications</li> <li>• Decisions on service charges</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage Two</b></p>	<p>If the customer(s) is not satisfied with the outcome from Stage One they may escalate their case to Stage Two.</p> <p>The complaint will be acknowledged, defined and logged within Five working days and customer(s) will be advised who will be investigating.</p> <p>The case will be reinvestigated by an alternative member staff than dealt with the complaint at Stage One.</p> <p>If agreed between the investigating officer and the customer or specifically requested by the customer, a meeting may be arranged for the case to be</p>	<p>If the customer(s) is not satisfied with the outcome from Stage One they may escalate their case to Stage Two.</p> <p>The response for Stage two appeals will mirror that for the Stage Two complaints (opposite).</p>

	<p>discussed in person at an agreed location.</p> <p>Customers that chose to attend a meeting may be accompanied, as long as they advise OVH who this will be and in what capacity, Two days before the meeting is due to take place. They may also submit evidence (again giving two days' notice). If extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated by the customer, OVH may choose to waive this notice requirement or accept a shorter notice period.</p> <p>After the Stage Two investigations are completed, the customer will normally receive a full reply within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, unless an extension is required and they will be provided with the details of why this is necessary. In most cases OVH will not unreasonably extend a stage Two complaint beyond a further 20 working days for initial response and in all cases where extensions are necessary, the customer will be provided with contact details of the Housing Ombudsman.</p>	
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- 3.1.4.1 Where OVH believes complaints are being made in an unacceptable way such as persistent, vexatious or malicious complaints, it may manage the complaints outside of formal timescales and may invoke its Unacceptable Behaviour Policy.
- 3.1.4.2 This may allow OVH to liaise with external support agencies such as the Housing Ombudsman and consider the best course of action to resolve a complaint.
- 3.1.4.3 Where this happens, OVH will write to the complainant advising of their decision and what that means for their contact with the organisation. Where a customer has raised multiple complaints or appeals, a customer may be designated a single point of contact to ensure consistency.
- 3.1.4.4 OVH will only escalate complaints when the substance of the case remains the same as Stage One. If new elements are raised, which would result in a substantially different resolution than would have been offered at Stage One, a new complaint will be opened.
- 3.1.5 Stages One and Two of the complaints and general appeals process are also available in the cases of collective disputes.

3.1.6	Stages One and Two of the complaint's investigation process will be available to non-OVH customers (third parties) but they will not be able to pursue matters further via the external complaint process outlined below (see 3.3).
3.1.7	The general appeals process will be available to all parties, with whom there is a connection and associated impact in the delivery OVH services.
3.1.8	OVH will not normally investigate complaints or hear appeals that relate to matters that are found to have occurred 12 months or more before being reported, unless the customer can demonstrate extenuating circumstances or OVH acknowledges that there may be ongoing / unresolved issues.
3.1.9	Similarly, OVH will not accept escalation between Stages of the internal complaints and appeals process where 12 months or more elapses between Stages, unless extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated. If exceptions are accepted these will be at the discretion of the Customer Experience Team.
3.1.10	OVH may also choose not to accept complaints that have already been considered under the Complaints Policy unless the complainant can reasonably demonstrate that there are factors which have not previously been considered or there are extenuating circumstances why the same issue should be re-investigated.
3.1.11	Where OVH refuses to investigate complaints in the above circumstances a letter will be sent to the complainant outlining the reasons why this course of action has been taken.
3.1.12	<b>Complaints and appeals where legal proceedings have commenced</b>
3.1.12.1	Where customers pursue legal action against OVH in connection with complaints and appeals, OVH will continue to investigate and take action to find effective resolution of issues raised through its internal processes and where these have been exhausted, by referral to the Housing Ombudsman (where customers choose this route).
3.1.12.2	This will include continuing to work with customers to carry out any remedial works whilst they have initiated the Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims.
3.1.12.3	Only when court proceedings have commenced that OVH may need to suspend or cease its internal investigation processes (this involves filing details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, at court).
3.1.12.4	Even where this is the case, OVH will be mindful to continue all reasonable efforts to resolve the root cause of the complaint e.g. attempting to complete outstanding repairs or remedial works.
3.2	<b>Complaints received via social media</b>
3.2.1	Where OVH receives complaints via social media (and it is clear that a complaint is being made and not general commentary or a request for service) it will log the complaint and endeavor to respond direct to the complainant, within the timescales outlined in 3.1.4 above (not publicly), where the complainants details are known.

3.2.2 As far as is possible, OVH will look to maintain confidentiality for complaints received in this way in line with data protection principles and the provisions set out in its Data Protection Policy.

### 3.3 External Complaints and Appeals Process

3.3.1 In line with the provisions of the Building Safety Act 2022, when a customer has exhausted the internal complaints process (i.e. Stages One and Two) and they are still not satisfied with the response provided, they may refer their case to the Independent Housing Ombudsman for investigation.

3.3.2 Customers may contact the Housing Ombudsman at any Stage of an active complaint for advice but the Housing Ombudsman will only investigate complaints that have exhausted the internal Stages (Stage One and Two) without satisfactory resolution.

3.3.3 The contact details for the Housing Ombudsman are as follows:

- Online Complaints form available at <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>
- Via email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Via telephone: **0300 111 3000** (9.15am-5.15pm: Monday to Friday)
- In writing to: **Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET**

3.3.4 Customers that choose to refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman (when they are not satisfied with the response provided by OVH at Stages One and Two) will need to liaise with the Housing Ombudsman direct for timescales of when they can expect a determination and response.

3.3.5 Customers should note, similar to the stance of OVH, the Housing Ombudsman will not investigate or make determinations on complaints where legal proceedings have commenced.

3.3.6 OVH will provide the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman on its website and in all written correspondence connected with complaints handling.

3.3.7 **Note:** Where a customer is not satisfied with a complaint that is in regard to buildings and fire safety issues in OVH's high-rise buildings they may also contact the Building Safety Regulator (See OVH's Mandatory Occurrence Policy for further details).

3.3.8 The contact details for the Building Safety Regulator are as follows

- Online contact via: [Contact the Building Safety Regulator - GOV.UK](#)
- By telephone **0300 790 6787**

### 3.4 Statutory Appeals

3.4.1.1 In addition to 'general appeals' there are a number of areas of service delivery where OVH customers have a legal right to an internal appeal, known as 'statutory appeals'.

3.4.1.2 All statutory appeals are on a One Stage process and will be heard via an appeal meeting, at which the customer may choose to make personal representation, submit evidence and be accompanied by a person of their choice, giving OVH 48 hours' notice in advance of the

meeting. All statutory appeals will be heard by a more senior officer than sanctioned the original decision.

3.4.1.3 Any subsequent changes to this evidence or change of the person accompanying may result in the review being postponed, the evidence not being considered or a refusal to hear the tenant(s) representative.

3.4.1.4 If having requested an internal appeal hearing, the customer(s) fail to attend or inform OVH of the reasons why they cannot attend, the reviewing officer may proceed with the hearing in their absence.

3.4.1.5 On a discretionary basis OVH may choose to postpone a hearing if requested by the customer(s) and there is a justifiable reason for doing so or if the person due to hear the appeal is unavailable for any reason.

3.4.1.6 This may, however, not always be possible if the delay would prevent OVH from taking expedient legal action to remedy a tenancy breach or it would result in hearings being outside the permitted legal framework.

3.4.1.7 If during the course of a hearing an adjournment is requested by either OVH, the customer(s) or their representatives and a further meeting is necessary, OVH will give reasonable notice of the date, time and venue of the adjourned hearing.

3.4.1.8 When hearing internal statutory appeals, the reviewing officer will assess the following:

- If the legal procedures and notice periods have been adhered to in serving of notices or letters sent to tenant(s) advising of actions to be taken
- It was appropriate in terms of evidence provided
- The decision will stand up to scrutiny

3.4.1.9 Statutory appeals and the timescales that will apply are as follows:

### 3.4.2 **Decision to extend or terminate starter tenancies**

3.4.2.1 Customers who want to appeal against this decision must inform OVH in writing within 14 days of the notice or letter being served, advising them of its decision to extend or terminate the starter tenancy.

3.4.2.2 After carrying out a review, where the appeal is against the decision to terminate a starter tenancy, OVH will notify the customer of the results in writing before the date the possession proceedings begin as specified in the notice or letter seeking possession.

3.4.2.3 If the appeal is against the decision to extend a starter tenancy, OVH will inform the customer of the outcome of the review in writing before the 12 month anniversary of the starter tenancy.

### 3.4.3 **Decision to seek possession of a property on a demoted tenancy**

3.4.3.1 Customers who want to appeal against OVH's decision to seek possession of a property on a demoted tenancy, must inform OVH in writing within 14 days of receipt of the Notice Seeking Possession being served.

3.4.3.2	OVH will give the tenant(s) no less than Five days' notice of the hearing (giving time and venue for the meeting). OVH will inform the tenant(s) of the review results in writing before the date of which possession proceedings may begin.
3.4.4	<b>Decision to decline applications for mutual exchange or succession</b>
3.4.4.1	If applicants wish to appeal against a decision made concerning their mutual exchange or succession application, they should inform OVH in writing within 10 days of being informed of the decision to refuse their application. OVH will inform the applicant of the outcome within 10 working days of the hearing date of its decision.
3.4.4.2	Statutory appeals for mutual exchange decisions will only apply to social rent and affordable rent as some tenancy types are legally not allowed to mutual exchange, e.g. shared ownership or rent to buy tenancies.
3.4.5	<b>Decisions to seek possession on assured tenancies under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014</b>
3.4.5.1	Customers can request a review of OVH's decision to seek possession under the absolute ground for possession as per the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014. The appeal should be made in writing within Seven days of the notice to seek possession being served on the tenant.
3.4.5.2	OVH will communicate the outcome of the review to the tenant in writing before the date on which proceedings for possession may be commenced.
3.5	<b>Complaints and Appeals about the operation of the Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme (Property Pool Plus - PPP)</b>
3.5.1	OVH performs the role of Scheme Administrator on a contractual basis on behalf of Sefton MBC. Applications to join the Sefton social housing register are administered in line with the local authorities PPP Allocations Scheme Policy, see <a href="http://www.propertypoolplus.org.uk">www.propertypoolplus.org.uk</a> .
3.5.2	As part of this contractual arrangement, OVH has responsibility for investigating and providing a response to Stage One complaints about service and Stage One appeals to request a review of a decision. Complaints about service will be handled as outlined in 3.1.4 above. Stage One appeals will be handled as outlined in the local authorities Property Pool Plus Allocations scheme Policy.
3.5.3	If the customer is not satisfied with the response that OVH provides, they may escalate their complaint or appeal to Stage Two. All Stage Two complaints and appeals, however, will be investigated and responded to by Sefton MBC direct.
3.5.4	In these circumstances and in accordance with established information sharing protocols, OVH will share all correspondence and actions taken at the Stage One investigation with Sefton MBC.
3.5.5	If the customer is still not satisfied, once all investigations are concluded and a response has been provided at Stage Two by Sefton MBC, they may choose to forward the complaint or appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman.

3.5.6	The above arrangements for dealing with complaints or appeals are in relation to the PPP scheme in the Sefton area only. Separate arrangements will exist for other local authorities that participate in the PPP scheme and where OVH participates in alternative choice-based lettings schemes.
3.5.7	If customers wish to make complaints or appeals about OVH's role in allocations outside of the Sefton area, they should first contact OVH who will advise on the correct procedures to follow.
3.6	<b>Feedback</b>
3.6.1	OVH will maximise all types of formal and informal customer feedback to drive service improvement.
3.6.2	The intelligence gained from of all forms of feedback including performance and satisfaction information is regularly shared with involved tenants. The information is used to identify improvement opportunities and may trigger a service review and remedial actions when there are any dips in performance.
3.6.3	OVH's Customer Access staff endeavor to capture all informal interactions which are not complaints, appeals, suggestions or compliments, whether positive or negative comments about the services OVH delivers.
3.6.4	OVH will use this information to identify issues that are common to a number of customers and detail the action taken as a result in customer newsletters and on the website.
3.7	<b>Compliments</b>
3.7.1	OVH encourage customers to let us know when OVH have done something they are satisfied with, as well as areas it needs to improve. OVH keeps a central register of all compliments received, they are shared with the Executive Management Team and where individual staff members are identified as having delivered excellent services, they are sent an internal message of thanks.
3.8	<b>Suggestions</b>
3.8.1	OVH encourage all customers to submit suggestions on how it can change and improve the ways in which it works to deliver better services. Any suggestions adopted are publicised and individually acknowledged.
3.9	<b>Surveys</b>
3.9.1	OVH make extensive use of surveys to gain customer intelligence and assess satisfaction with the ways in which it is delivering services. OVH has a programme of surveys that is reviewed annually with the tenant-led Service Review Groups and includes STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) surveys and Tenant Satisfaction Measurement monitoring, on-going in house surveys and one off service-specific surveys.

3.10	<b>Reasonable Adjustments</b>
3.10.1	For all complaints, appeals or when eliciting customer feedback OVH will endeavor to make 'reasonable adjustments' to its practice and processes where a customer is at a 'substantial disadvantage i.e. more than minor or trivial', as a result of their protected characteristics or any other reason why they might receive a differential service, in line with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010.
3.10.2	<p>This may include acting outside the parameters outlined in this Policy and offering a flexible approach. Non exhaustive examples of the type of actions OVH may put in place include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using advocates and working with support agencies when investigating complaints and seeking effective resolutions</li> <li>• Making referrals to support agencies when additional support needs are identified that are not currently being met</li> <li>• Ensuring preferred communication requirements are catered for e.g. via email, in large print, verbal communications only or in alternative languages</li> <li>• Ensuring any meeting venues that are used and facilitated by OVH in the course of a complaints investigation e.g. at Stage Two meetings or appeal hearings are accessible and meet identified needs</li> <li>• Allowing additional time for implementation of any reasonable adjustments in the complaints investigation process and response targets or for customers to respond and escalate between Stages (where specific needs are identified)</li> </ul>
3.10.3	OVH will only implement reasonable adjustments when the customer specifically requests them, makes OVH aware that they may have additional needs or when OVH has prior information provided by the customer (and kept up-to-date by the customer) of any such needs.
3.10.4	OVH will endeavor to identify the need for any reasonable adjustments for customers making complaints at the first point of contact and when complaints are acknowledged. This will include sensitive, non-intrusive and non-judgmental questions to establish any changes to process that may be required or provision of reasonable adjustments.
3.10.5	OVH will record and monitor the use of all reasonable adjustments when investigating and responding to complaints, appeals and for customer feedback mechanisms and will make this information available to involved customers and in annual reporting.
3.10.6	In making reasonable adjustments, OVH will seek to find effective and practical solutions to meet individual needs and may alter its approach on a case-by-case basis.
3.10.7	Through ongoing monitoring and trend analysis, OVH will aim to identify any changes to process or best practice that would benefit all customers and lead to continuous service improvement.
3.10.8	Further details of OVH's approach to dealing with vulnerable customers or reasonable adjustments can be found in OVH's 'Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy'.

<b>4</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
4.1	All OVH staff have a responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy and should take ownership of complaints, appeals and feedback handling. All OVH staff will be expected to cooperate with any internal investigations and panel meetings as required.
4.2	Where OVH receive complaints, appeals or feedback that are a result of the contents of its published policies, this will trigger a review of the Policy which will take place with customer representatives (Customer Policy Review Group) unless the Policy has been reviewed within the past Six months (in which case a reply will be sent to the customer outlining the details of the review and no further review of the Policy will take place unless it is scheduled or there are other factors that would normally prompt a review e.g. change in legislation).
4.3	Where required, the review of OVH published policies will take place at the earliest possible opportunity, subject to the availability of customer representatives and internal resources. Where this type of review is agreed, OVH will close the case and write to the customer to inform them of the outcome and how the situation will be remedied.
4.4	After a case has been closed, OVH will keep the customer informed of actions being taken including any changes made to the Policy.
4.5	If staff become aware that there are problems with the effective operation of the Policy or the procedures that support it, they should complete a 'change request' within the OVH document management system and these will be incorporated into the Policy / procedural review process.
<b>5</b>	<b>Performance</b>
5.1	OVH will monitor and report performance on the delivery of the service quarterly with Service Managers and twice yearly with the Executive Management Team and Board.
5.2	OVH will also share performance information with customers that are engaged through the formal involvement structures and via regular reporting on its website. The key performance indicators include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with the complaints and appeals handling process</li> <li>• Performance on meeting response targets</li> <li>• Number of escalations between Stages</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Consultation</b>
6.1	All OVH staff have been consulted in the development of this Policy. The Customer Policy and Strategy Review Group have also been consulted in the development of this Policy in September 2025.
<b>7</b>	<b>Review</b>
7.1	The OVH Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy will be reviewed Annually, as near as is possible from the date of Executive Management Team (EMT) approval or as required by the

	introduction of new legislation, regulation or as a result of OVH system audits. The review process will ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.		
<b>8</b>	<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>		
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	Yes	
8.2	When was EIA conducted and by who?	The EIA conducted by the Strategic Regulatory Compliance Manager and the Policy and Strategy Administrator in September 2025 is still relevant for this Policy	
8.3	Results of EIA	<p>Main recommendations from EIA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff responding to complaints to consider possible vulnerabilities of complainants that may be due to their protected characteristics and tailor responses accordingly</li> <li>• OVH to continue to monitor complaints received against known customer profile information for trend analysis, mitigation measures where required and to identify any potential barriers to service</li> </ul>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Scheme of Delegation</b>		
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the Policy and any amendments to it	Executive Management Team	
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating Policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Director of Housing and Customer Services	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Director of Housing and Customer Services	
<b>10</b>	<b>Amendment Log</b>		
<b>Date of revision:</b>	<b>Reason for revision:</b>	<b>Consultation record:</b>	<b>Record of amendments:</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2024	In line with changes in operational practice	See section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change at 1.5 to reflect revised Regulatory Standards (effective from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change at 1.6.1 to include definition of 'Request for Service'</li> <li>• New clause inserted at 3.1.11 stating reasons why OVH may refuse to investigate a complaint</li> <li>• Inclusion at 1.9 and 3.10.8 to reference OVH Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy</li> <li>• Minor wording changes throughout to reflect revised Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code (effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024) and change of response timescales at 3.1.4 to reflect the same</li> </ul>
4 <sup>th</sup> November 2025	Policy reviewed to align with OVH business practice	See section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team names and job titles updated throughout</li> <li>• Equality, Diversity and Human Rights statement updated</li> <li>• EIA information updated in Section 8</li> <li>• Policy review period has been moved from three years to annually</li> </ul>
19 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Policy has been reviewed to ensure compliance with Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code	See section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information relating to the means by which complaints can be made enhanced at 2.2</li> <li>• Additions added to Section 3.1.4 in regard to timescales for extensions (where required) at Stages One and Two of complaint investigations and response</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Additions added at 3.1.4 for complaints in regard to heat networks</li></ul>
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