

1. Purpose

Launchpad helps some of Reading's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people to turn their lives around and fulfil their potential. We hope that all experiences with our services are positive. However, we appreciate that sometimes they may not be delivered to everyone's satisfaction and therefore want to ensure our stakeholders can communicate their feedback and complaints effectively.

We aim to listen to all comments and resolve any issues informally, where possible, in the first instance. We will ensure that whoever has given the feedback or made a complaint feels that they have been listened to, their comments understood and that we have a clear vision of the expected outcome. All feedback and complaints will receive an acknowledgement within two days and a full response within ten working days from the date of receipt.

Launchpad Reading treats all feedback and complaints seriously. We have a culture of learning, and use comments about our services to shape and improve upon the way in which we deliver our services. If Launchpad has failed in our service delivery, we will identify the problem, apologise and then put it right - so that it doesn't happen again. Launchpad will review the way in which we have changed our service delivery to ensure we are continuously improving.

2. Scope

This policy covers all aspects of Launchpad Reading's service delivery.

3. Definitions

A "**stakeholder**" is any person with an interest or concern in Launchpad's services. Usually this will be a Launchpad client or a neighbour of one of our Supported Housing properties.

"**Feedback**" is where a stakeholder wishes to provide an insight into the way in which we carry out our services. Feedback includes compliments where staff have delivered exceptional service. People leaving feedback may not necessarily expect any follow up actions.

A "**complaint**" is where any stakeholder is dissatisfied with the standard of service provided, action taken or lack of action by Launchpad. A complaint is different from feedback, an enquiry, request or anti-social behaviour incident.

An "**enquiry**" is where a stakeholder contacts us to find out information. An example of this would be a Launchpad tenant ringing to find out information about their rent account or find out about our services. This is not a complaint. If we fail to respond to this enquiry, this could potentially lead to a complaint.

A "**request**" is where a stakeholder asks for us to carry out an action. An example of this would be a Launchpad tenant requesting a repair to be carried out to their property. This is not a complaint. If we fail to complete this request, this could potentially lead to a complaint.

An "**anti-social behaviour incident**" is where a Launchpad Supported Housing tenant causes nuisance, harassment or annoyance to another other person. An example of this is where a tenant causes noise nuisance by playing loud music in their property. When this is reported to Launchpad, this is not a complaint. If we fail to respond to this incident or fail to take action to resolve the issue, this could potentially lead to a complaint.

4. Recording feedback

Launchpad will record all relevant feedback, including compliments. Launchpad proactively seeks feedback from clients in the way in which we deliver our services. Support Services will complete feedback forms with clients every time a Support Plan is reviewed. This feedback will be utilised to inform improvements to the delivery of our services and may also be used anonymously for publicity and marketing purposes.

5. Complaints Process

a. How does a complaint get made?

In the first instance, we aim to resolve all issues informally by listening to the person who has an issue with the way in which we have delivered and/or are delivering our service and try to rectify the issue. If we cannot resolve this informally, a formal complaint may be made.

We accept complaints in any format; however we usually receive them on the telephone, by email or letter. We need to ensure that we have as much detail about the complaint as possible. We will ensure that whoever is making the complaint feels that they have been listened to, their complaint understood and we have a clear vision of what they want to achieve as an outcome. Any member of staff or management may accept a complaint. A member of staff will then explain the complaint handling process as set out below giving actions and timescales.

b. What will happen then?

The complaint will be allocated to an appropriate member of staff or manager who will send the person making a complaint an acknowledgement letter (appendix 1) and a copy of this policy. The complaint is then entered onto our complaints database for service improvement and monitoring purposes.

The staff member or manager will then carry out an investigation into the complaint, speaking to all relevant people and gather all appropriate information relating to the issue, respecting confidentiality where necessary.

c. In what circumstances will complaints not be accepted?

In some exceptional circumstances, Launchpad may decide to refuse to deal with a complaint. These circumstances include, but are not limited to –

1. If a complaint about an issue has already been made and dealt with through Launchpad Reading's Complaints process. If the person making the complaint is unhappy with the outcome of their original complaint, they should speak with their local councillor, or MP. Alternatively they may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service where the complaint relates to a Housing issue.
2. Where the person making the complaint or the complaint itself is persistent, vexatious or unreasonable.
3. Where the person making a complaint or their advocate has been rude, threatening or abusive towards any member of Launchpad's staff or volunteers.
4. Where the person making the complaint has not adhered to the timescales highlighted within this policy.
5. Where the complaint does not relate to the delivery of services provided by Launchpad Reading

d. What are the timescales?

All complaints will be acknowledged in writing (when we have an address or e-mail address to send an acknowledgement to) within **2 working days**.

A full response will be communicated to the person who made the complaint within **10 working days** from the date of receiving the complaint. In exceptional circumstances, an

extension to this timescale may be required should the complaint be particularly complex. This will be communicated clearly to the person making the complaint and a reason for the extension given.

e. What are the outcomes of a complaint?

Complaints will be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. The resulting actions will depend on the nature and seriousness of the complaint. The person making the complaint will be spoken to, either in person or on the telephone (whichever is appropriate) to give the outcome of the complaint. A written summary of the response detailing the outcomes will be sent to the person making the complaint (when we have an address or e-mail address).

f. How can the outcome of a complaint be appealed?

The person making the complaint may seek for the outcome of the investigation to be reviewed. This must be requested within 10 working day of the response being sent. The review will be carried out by a manager from another department within Launchpad. This will either be a Support Service Manager, Finance Manager, HR Manager, Head of Operations or Chief Executive Officer.

A meeting between the person who made the complaint and the manager conducting the review will take place within 10 working days of the request for a review. The person making the complaint may be accompanied by an appropriate person. If the person making the complaint requires support during the meeting, Launchpad Reading will arrange for an advocate either from the CAB or another appropriate advocacy agency.

Launchpad Reading may decide that the risk of meeting with the person who has made the complaint is unmanageable. In this situation, the person making the complaint may send an appropriate advocate to represent their views. The reason for the unmanageable risk will be shared with the person who has made the complaint.

The outcome of the review will be communicated clearly to the person making the complaint within 10 working days of the meeting.

If the person making the complaint does not agree with the outcome of the review, they have the right for the review to be reviewed for a final time. This must be requested within 10 working day of the review response being sent. This final review carried out by Launchpad's Board of Trustees. The final review will take place at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

The outcome of the review will be communicated clearly to the person making the complaint within 10 working days of the meeting.

If the person making the complaint disagrees with the outcome of the final review; they should contact a "Designated Person". A Designated Person is either an MP, local Councillor or tenant panel. The tenant panel at Launchpad is the Client's Forum.

Designated Persons are there to help resolve disputes between tenants and their landlord. They can do this in whatever way they think is most likely to work. If the Designated Person cannot help, they can refer to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The person making the complaint may also contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly, once Launchpad's complaint policy has been exhausted. The complaint must be made in writing to –
Housing Ombudsman Service // Exchange Tower Harbour Exchange Square London E14 9GE // Tel: 0300 111 3000 info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk // www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

6. Housing Association Tenants

Some Launchpad accommodation is let via Housing Associations. If the person making the complaint is a Housing Association tenant, they have the right to contact the Association and follow their complaints procedure. A member of Launchpad's staff will advise the person making the complaint who they should contact.

7. Confidentiality

Launchpad Reading will treat all personal and sensitive information in line with our Confidentiality Policy and the Data Protection Act 1988. External agencies will only be contacted if consent has been granted by the person making the complaint, required by law or for the purposes of Safeguarding or Child Protection.

8. Training and Publicity

Launchpad Reading ensures that all staff have a full understanding of their responsibility in managing and handling feedback and complaints. All staff and managers have appropriate levels of training in order to facilitate this policy effectively.

This Policy will be given to all new clients and displayed on Launchpad's website.

9. Equality and Diversity

People making a complaint have the right to be treated fairly and equally, irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. They also have the right to make a complaint without fear of reprisal or victimisation as a result of making a complaint.

Launchpad will manage all complaints within the guidelines set out within our Equality and Diversity Policy and Procedures.

The provision of services to people who make a complaint will not be affected. People making a complaint have the right to be reasonably kept informed of the progress of their complaint and informed of the outcome within prescribed timescales. If the person making a complaint is not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they have the right to use the appeals process detailed within this policy.

10. Client Involvement

This policy has been created and reviewed in partnership with Launchpad's Client Representatives. Their views and experiences have been utilised in order to create a policy which meets the needs of Launchpad's clients.

11. Monitoring and reporting

We regularly review feedback, complaints and outcomes to ensure that we are continuously learning and improving our services. Data relating to our performance in managing complaints will be shared with Launchpad's Board of Trustees annually via the Head of Operations in order to inform strategic planning.

APPENDIX 1

Name
Address
Address

Date

Dear NAME

COMPLAINT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am writing to acknowledge your complaint relating to DETAILS OF COMPLAINT received on DATE.

NAME will be dealing with your complaint. A full and thorough investigation will take place in relation to your complaint.

You will receive a response by DATE (10 WORKING DAYS AFTER RECEIVING COMPLAINT).

Should you wish to provide additional information in relation to your complaint, please contact NAME.

Please find enclosed a copy of Launchpad's Feedback and Complaints Policy.

Yours sincerely

NAME
JOB TITLE