

Complaint Resolution Policy

Policy Number: PSHC-007A

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Date Amended: Not Applicable

Procedure Number: PSHC-007B

1. Background

The Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation (PSHC) encourages all types of feedback from anyone with whom it has a relationship. This can include, but is not limited to, tenants, contractors, and members of the public. Feedback includes compliments, enquiries, suggestions, comments, and complaints. The PSHC views all feedback as an opportunity for continuous improvement in order to strengthen its ongoing relationship with, and service to, tenants and the broader community.

The PSHC understands that through the normal course of its interactions, there will be instances when tenants are dissatisfied with the treatment they have received from fellow tenants, PSHC staff/management, and/or contractors. Tenants may also be dissatisfied with decisions that have been made related to policies, programs, processes, or procedures within the PSHC. The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for resolving complaints in a fair and consistent manner.

2. Policy

- 2.1.** The PSHC will take all complaints filed at our office seriously and will investigate and make every reasonable effort to resolve all genuine complaints and issues within the PSHC's means in a timely manner.
- 2.2.** Complaints will be reviewed with impartiality and respect to the parties involved and will be treated in a confidential manner in order to protect the privacy of all parties involved (e.g. complainant, other tenants, staff, contractors, etc.). This is in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*.
- 2.3.** When resolving complaints, PHSC will:
 - Investigate complaints that involve a violation of the lease agreement, *Housing Services Act, 2011*, *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006*, and/or municipal by-laws.

- Make every effort to help resolve/mediate the issues.
- Consider evicting tenants who, despite all efforts to resolve the problem, still unreasonably disturb, harass, or otherwise discriminate against other tenants/residents, staff and/or contractors.
- Deal immediately with tenants who behave violently towards other tenants, staff and/or contractors, or otherwise threaten their safety or security. If tenants feel they are being threatened or that a crime has been committed, they will be advised to call the local Police service or 911 if it is an emergency.

2.4. When resolving complaints, PSHC will not:

- Get involved in rumours.
- Get involved in minor disputes.
- Act on a complaint if the complaint is discriminatory.
- Get involved in issues where PSHC, as the landlord, has no authority to deal with the complaint.
- Consider evicting tenants if there is limited documented evidence or no witnesses.

2.5. Tenants/residents are strongly encouraged to submit their concerns in writing. Written complaints provide a useful record and often give a more detailed description about the incident/issue.

Written complaints should provide the following information:

- Name and contact information of person making complaint
- Date and time of incident
- What happened and where (location on the property)
- Who was involved and any witnesses
- Local authorities (police, fire) involved (if any)

Form 302 – Complaint Form will be provided and available to assist with this process. If a complainant is not able to complete a written complaint, a PSHC staff will be available to assist in-person or over the phone.

2.6. If tenants or residents feel they are being threatened, or that a crime has been committed, they will be advised to call the local Police Services or 911 if it is an emergency.

2.7. The PSHC prohibits any punitive action against people who pursue their rights under this policy. Anyone who retaliates against someone who has made a

complaint may face consequences through the *Residential Tenancies Act 2006*, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, or the criminal justice system.

3. Complaint Categories

3.1. Complaints covered by this policy include:

- Breach of Municipal By-Laws (e.g. noise restrictions)
- Breach of PSHC Policies (e.g. smoking in common areas/non-smoking unit, unauthorized occupants remaining in unit, pet care, etc.)
- Building Security (e.g. uninvited individuals entering building, non-tenants sleeping in common areas of building)
- Fraud (e.g. misuse of subsidy, contravening the HSA)
- Health & Safety (e.g. pest control: fleas, bed bugs, unsafe disposal of syringes, etc.)
- Illegal Activity (e.g. production, trafficking, possession of illegal drugs, threats, injury, assault, etc.)
- Maintenance (e.g. charge back, length of time taken to address issues/requests)
- Property Damage (e.g. vandalism, broken doors, etc.)
- Staff Conduct (e.g. perceived mistreatment, inappropriate behaviour)

3.2. Complaints *not* covered in this policy include:

- Those related to services and programs for which the PSHC is not responsible;
- Those which lack specific details including what, where, who, and when. These are difficult, if not impossible, to assess or follow-up on;
- Decisions that are eligible for a Request for a Review of a Decision (i.e. appeals) by the Service Manager (as per City of Stratford Social Housing Directive 2014-40 System of Review of Decisions); and

3.3. Those related to human rights, harassment, and/or discrimination which are covered in separate policies (Human Rights & Accommodation Policy, Harassment & Anti-Discrimination Policy).

4. Definitions

Comment: a remark (verbal or written) expressing an opinion or reaction.

Complaint: an expression of dissatisfaction related to a service, behaviour, action, or decision that negatively impacts a person's experience.

Complainant: a person who makes a complaint.

Compliment: an expression of approval for a service, program, product, process, or person.

Contractor: a person or company hired by the PSHC to complete a specific task or service, often related to unit and building maintenance.

Enquiry: a request for service or information (can be general or specific).

Feedback: a reaction or response to a process or activity. Comments, complaints, compliments, enquiries, and suggestions are all forms of feedback.

Member of the Public: a person who is not a tenant but is a resident of the community in which the PSHC operates.

Parties: all those involved in a complaint including the complainant and the persons at whom the complaint is directed.

Residents: Anyone living in PSHC units, including tenants and occupants.

Suggestion: an idea, proposition, or plan that is mentioned or introduced for consideration or possible action.

Tenant: a person who has signed a lease and who enjoys all of the rights and responsibilities of tenancy.

5. Legislative Authority

Ontario Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)

Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA)

6. Other Relevant Policies

Human Rights & Accommodation Policy (PSHC-004A)

7. Attachments

Complaint Form

Acknowledgement Letter of Complete Complaint Form

Notification Letter of Incomplete Complaint Form

Notification Letter of a Non-Complaint