

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



What is This Guide For?

The management and staff at Venus Healthcare Homes do their best to provide a safe, welcoming home. However, even in great homes, things can go wrong. When they do, we want, and need you, to tell us so we can put them right fast and learn for the future. A “complaint” simply means you feel unhappy about something we did or did not do.

What is a Complaint?

A complaint might be about:

- the quality of a service you were promised;
- how a member of staff spoke to you or treated you (including things they did outside work that make you feel unsafe);
- something we failed to do, such as repair damage or answer a request.

What is Not Covered?

Sometimes you might disagree with a national rule or with a decision made by your social worker. That is not the kind of complaint this policy deals with. We call those “non-service issues”. We will still listen and pass them to the right person, but they follow a different route.

1. You will always be treated politely, whatever your age, identity or circumstances.
2. Your complaint is kept confidential, except where the law says we must share information to keep you or others safe.
3. We will acknowledge your written complaint within 7 working days and aim to send a full response within 28 working days. If a problem is complex we will keep you updated every step of the way.

Making a complaint will never put your place here at risk and you will never be treated badly for speaking up.

Who Can Help You Make a Complaint?

You can ask another person to complain on your behalf. This could be:

- a friend or family member;
- your social worker, or key worker;
- an advocate.

If you choose someone, please let us know we are allowed to discuss your private details with them. If an MP or local councillor is helping you we do not need extra consent because the law already covers that.

How to Submit Your Complaint

You can make a complaint in any of the following ways:

1. Tell any manager or staff member. They will write down what you say so nothing is missed. This can even be via text or WhatsApp messages.
2. Email: safespaces@venushealthcare.co.uk
3. Send a letter to Venus Healthcare Homes, PO Box 345, Hampton, TW12 9EA
4. Call our Head Office on 0330 320 3320 to make a complaint.

If you require any reasonable adjustments let us know so we can arrange an interpreter, easy read format materials or anything else to help you communicate.

What Happens Next?

When we receive your complaint we will record it in our Complaints Register.

The Registered Manager will assign a relevant manager to lead the investigation into the complaint.

The Registered Manager will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 7 days of receiving your complaint.

The assigned manager will investigate the complaint and come back to you within 28 working days to share the findings of their investigation.

If it takes us longer to investigate your complaint, we will write to you informing you of the extension and giving reasons why we require it.

At the end of each investigation, the complaint will either be upheld or dismissed. If the complaint is upheld we will also include an action plan setting out what we are doing to ensure there is no repeat of the situation which led to the complaint.

The complaint is considered closed on the day when we send written communication of our findings to you.

Still Unhappy?

You can ask the Local Authority complaints team or, if necessary, the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman to look at how we handled things.

The details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are available at:
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

Possible Remedies

When we have made a mistake we will own it and take action that may include:

- a genuine written or spoken apology;
- completing the task we missed (for example repairing damage, cleaning, replacing an item);
- changing a decision or updating a policy so it does not happen again;
- extra staff training or closer supervision;
- financial compensation where there is a statutory provision for this.

Reasonable Adjustments & Accessible Formats

We want everyone to be able to use this policy. If you need it in a different format (audio, large print, Easy Read, another language) or want support to raise a complaint, just ask your key worker or email us.

Vexatious Complaints & Abusive Behaviour

Very occasionally someone raises the same issue over and over or behaves in a way that scares, threatens or abuses staff or other young people. Examples include:

- repeated swearing, racist or homophobic language directed at staff;
- threats of violence or damage;
- constantly submitting identical complaints after we have fully investigated.

If this happens we may:

1. warn the person that their behaviour is unacceptable and ask them to stop;
2. limit communication to one chosen channel (for example email only);
3. end direct contact for a fixed period;
4. involve the police if anyone's safety is at risk.

These steps are never taken lightly. Your right to complain remains, but abuse or harassment of others is not tolerated at Venus Healthcare Homes Ltd.