



## **HFS Housing Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Homes First will respond professionally and appropriately to all complaints from all individuals.
- Housing residents have a right to make a complaint and not fear consequences.
- Staff are to provide the HFS Complaint and Appeals Form, as well as a copy of this document upon request to the resident.
- All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible.
- Should a resident feel that they are being unfairly targeted, please address this matter with management immediately.
- Homes First will provide the contact information for Shelter, Support and Housing Administration to any resident who has exhausted Homes First's complaints and appeals process, remains dissatisfied with the resolution, and who wishes to escalate their complaint or appeal further.
- Homes First will provide the contact information for SSHA and the Office of the Ombudsman to any individual who wishes to make a complaint about a City of Toronto or SSHA program, service, or responsibility.

### **STEP 1: Formal complaint is verbally conveyed to Intensive Case Management Worker:**

- Intensive Case Management Worker and resident jointly attempt an amicable solution.
- If an amicable solution is not possible, the complaint form is provided and filled out with assistance from the Intensive Case Management Worker, if necessary.
- If necessary, the Intensive Case Management Worker will offer to transcribe the resident's complaint.
- Resident will sign the complaint to confirm that they have read and/or agree with the written complaint.
- If a resident's complaint is against a specific Intensive Case Management Worker, the complaint should be taken directly to the Supervisor.

**STEP 2: Resident files the written formal complaint to the Supervisor or designate:**

- The Supervisor or designate instigates a documented investigation.
- A written response will be provided to the resident within five working days, or interim or final decision if possible.
- The Supervisor or designate will issue a final report in as speedy a manner as possible.
- If the resident is still not satisfied with the response, he/she may forward the written complaint form, along with a letter to the Assistant Manager.

**STEP 3: Assistant Manager may respond in writing or arrange to meet with the resident within seven working days.**

- If the resident is still not satisfied with the response then he/she may forward the Written Complaint Form, along with a letter, to the Housing and Shelters Manager.

**STEP 4: Housing and Shelters Manager may respond in writing or arrange to meet with resident within seven working days.**

- If the resident is still not satisfied with this response then they may forward the Written Complaint Form, along with a letter, to the Chief Executive Officer.

**Step 5: Chief Executive Officer may respond in writing or arrange to meet with resident within seven working days.**

- The Chief Executive Officer's or designate's response to the resident is considered final.

**Other Avenues for Complaints and Appeals:**

- Staff will encourage and support residents in following Homes First's internal complaints and appeals process before contacting SSHA.
- If the resident's complaint is about the supervisor or manager, they do not need to submit an internal complaint form. In this case, staff should direct residents to submit a letter to the CEO.
- All complainants have the right to make a complaint about Homes First housing to the City of Toronto. If the resident is not satisfied with a decision made, they may escalate their complaint or appeal to SSHA Customer Service (416-392-8741 or [ssha@toronto.ca](mailto:ssha@toronto.ca)).
- If the resident has contacted SSHA and is still not satisfied, they may lodge a complaint with the City's Office of the Ombudsman (375 University Ave, Suite 203, Toronto, ON M5G 2J5; 416-392-7062; [ombudsman@toronto.ca](mailto:ombudsman@toronto.ca))

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- Created on February 1, 2018.
  - Approved by HFS Management Team on August 8, 2019.
  - This Policy applies to all of Homes First Housing.