



Everyone needs a home

HFS Non-Union Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

- Homes First aims to create an environment where non-union staff feel valued.
- A complaint is a written claim by an employee regarding a specific conflict with management or other staff.
- We will respond professionally and appropriately to all complaints from staff.
- The complaints policy provides a means for non-union employees to bring formal internal employment-related complaints to the attention of Homes First for resolution.
- All complaints will be handled as confidentially as possible.
- Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

Non-Union staff may make a complaint for feeling:

- They have been treated unfairly.
- They have been mistreated by our staff.
- Disagree with a decision we have made or policy we operate.

Step 1: Informal Complaints to a Homes First Staff Member:

- Non-union staff should discuss and resolve complaints they may have about Homes First or their job with their immediate supervisor in order to provide a speedy resolution of the complaint.
- For all complaints regarding a violation of a Board policy or an administrative rule, the employee shall report the complaint to his/her immediate supervisor within five days of the alleged policy violation. The alleged policy violation shall first be discussed with his/her immediate supervisor and resolved.

Step 2: Formal Complaint to Supervisor:

- If the complaint cannot be resolved informally by the employee's immediate supervisor, the employee should submit the complaint in writing to their

supervisor. The supervisor will consult with Human Resources, and will discuss the complaint with the employee and attempt to resolve the matter.

- The written complaint must:
 - Explain the nature of the complaint and the specific circumstances at issue;
 - Identify the rights, procedures, or policies violated; and
 - State the specific remedy sought by the employee.
- The employee should initiate the written complaint with his/her immediate supervisor within two (2) weeks of the incident that gave rise to the employee's concern. The supervisor will meet and discuss the matter fully with the employee and provide a written response to the employee regarding the complaint within two (2) weeks (if feasible) of being informed by the employee. If there is no response or if the response is not satisfactory to the employee, he/she may advance the complaint to the next step.

Step 3: Formal Complaint to Human Resources:

- In the event the matter is not satisfactorily resolved at the supervisor's level, the employee may submit a written appeal to Human Resources within one (1) week of the supervisor's response. To initiate the appeal the employee must submit:
 - A copy of the formal complaint;
 - A copy of the supervisor's response; and
 - Reason(s) for disagreeing with the supervisor's response.
- Human Resources will investigate as appropriate and will meet to discuss the matter fully with the employee and other relevant parties, if applicable, and will provide a written response to the employee within two (2) weeks of being notified of the issue by the employee. If there is no response or if the response is not satisfactory to the employee, he/she may advance the complaint to the next step.

Step 4: Formal Complaint to Chief Executive Officer

- If the employee still believes the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved at the Human Resources level, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Chief Executive Officer within one (1) week of receiving Human Resource's written

response. All information and documentation from the initial complaint should be included.

- The CEO's decision is considered final. If the employee remains unsatisfied with the resolution, he/she may advance the complaint to the appeal process.

Step 5: Appeal Process

- If the complainant believes that any of the claims alleged in the complaint were not satisfactorily resolved in any of the above steps, the complainant may file a written appeal to be reviewed by the Society Board of Directors. Appeals must be submitted in writing and must be submitted directly to Human Resources.
- The written appeal must contain the following information in order to be processed:
 - Employee name;
 - Explanation for why the employee is appealing the matter, including what allegations in the complaint were not satisfactorily resolved; and
 - The requested remedy.
- Human Resources should facilitate the complaint appeal procedure by first presenting the Board of Directors with all relevant documents, including but not limited to the following:
 - A copy of the employee's written complaint; and
 - A copy of the written response(s) from all departments.
- The Board of Directors will determine whether the complaint requires a formal hearing to include the complainant and/or relevant staff or whether it can be fairly decided based upon the written documents of the complaint.
- It is recommended that the employee have the opportunity for a hearing with the Board of Directors. However, the Board may make its decision based upon the written documents and recommendations without meeting with the employee.
- The Board of Directors will make the final decision on the submitted complaint within three (3) weeks of the hearing (or of the receipt of the complaint materials), whichever is applicable. The Board's written decision will be final and binding upon the department and the employee.
- It is expected that the time frames outlined in this procedure be adhered to. However any unforeseen delay will be promptly communicated to the

complainant. Working time lost by the employee(s) at a complaint meeting should be considered as time worked for pay purposes.

Keeping Complaints Confidential:

Complaints will be reviewed by managers as part of the investigation process. If your complaint is specifically about a member of staff at Homes First, it will be necessary for that person to be told that a complaint has been lodged against them to allow the investigation to proceed.

Other Avenues for Complaints and Appeals:

- Staff will encourage and support community members in following the HFS Non-Union Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure; however, if the individual making the complaint 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)

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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 Non-Union staff.