



RACP12_COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The complaints procedure is for any customer that accesses services provided by Rowan Alba, who is dissatisfied with the service provided to them as an individual.

Any complaints must be made within three months of the item at issue.

SUMMARY OF STAGES

STAGE	LEAD STAFF MEMBER	DECISION BY	MAXIMUM RESPONSE TIME	ADMINISTRATION
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Informal Stage	Front Line Staff	Team Leader	Immediate	Note in tenancy or case file & <u>informal complaints log</u>
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IF THE COMPLAINANT IS STILL UNHAPPY

First Stage	Team Leader	Scheme Manager	10 Working Days	<u>Complaints Record Form</u>
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IF THE COMPLAINANT IS STILL UNHAPPY

Second Stage	Scheme Manager	Chief Executive	20 Working Days	Report produced and decision circulated to all those involved.
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IF THE COMPLAINANT IS STILL UNHAPPY

Appeal	Chief Executive	Management Board	20 Working Days	Panel report is circulated to all those involved.
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IF THE COMPLAINANT IS STILL UNHAPPY REFER TO APPROPRIATE EXTERNAL BODY

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Rowan Alba has a formal complaints system for investigating and responding to complaints made by the users of services. The procedure outlines the overall organisational principles and practice for resolving and responding to complaints.
- 1.2 Complaints are viewed by Rowan Alba as a constructive part of the organisation's learning process, as they assist accountability for service provision.
- 1.3 The complaints procedure will be clear, straightforward and easy to understand and use. Written materials will be simply written and where possible, available in translations.
- 1.4 The complaints procedure covers all aspects of the service delivery throughout the organisation. However, complaints about other service users, which are not about the service response, should be dealt with using the Resident User and Neighbour Dispute or harassment procedures as appropriate.
- 1.5 The complaints procedure can be used by any service user, former service user, an applicant or prospective applicant for accommodation, centre, care or outreach service user, volunteer or training placement who is dissatisfied with the service provided to them by Rowan Alba as an individual. Complaints should generally be reported immediately. Those registered more than three months after the relevant event will only be actioned in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.6 Information about the complaints procedure will be included in information provided to applicants and all service users and will be available and publicised in the projects and offices. Managers should ensure that the Complaints Policy (Service User Summary) is displayed on all service notice boards.
- 1.7 No one will be treated less favourably or penalised in any way for making a complaint.
- 1.8 The complaints procedure will allow for a complainant to make use of an independent advocate.
- 1.9 Complaints will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. Maximum time limits will be laid down for responding to complaints at each stage of the



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procedure. A complainant wishing to take a complaint to the next stage must do so within three months of receiving the written outcome of the previous stage.

- 1.10 All complaints will be investigated fully, carefully and fairly. All those involved will be informed in writing of the decisions taken at the end of each stage, reasons for them, and what further action can be taken if the complainant is dissatisfied with the decision.
- 1.11 The aim at each stage will be to establish either that complaint is settled, or that a decision is taken about the complaint, so that it can, if required, proceed to the next stage.
- 1.12 All complaints will be treated as confidential. Where records are kept for monitoring purposes, the complainant's name will not be used.
- 1.13 Complaints will be recorded and monitored as part of the organisation's systems for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of its services overall. Appropriate remedial action will always be taken.
- 1.14 Staff will be informed of the procedures for dealing with complaints and training will be given about the aims of the complaints procedure and how it should be implemented.
- 1.15 The training will emphasise the importance of responding effectively to concerns and problems as they arise to ensure that the use of the procedure is minimised.
- 1.16 Service Users will be regularly updated about complaint themes and service responses through the local newsletters, meetings and liaison forums.
- 1.17 A complaint must be registered within six months of the relevant occurrence or series of occurrences.

2.0 MAKING A COMPLAINT

- 2.1 The procedure defines levels within Rowan Alba at which a complaint can be heard. These are the informal stage to a front line member of staff; the first stage formal complaint, to the Team Leader; second stage to the Manager and an appeal stage to the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 If the complainant exhausts the complaints procedure they will be referred to the Care Inspectorate or appropriate service funder such as social services. Where services are provided through a partner housing association the complaint will be referred to their complaints procedure.



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2.3 Each stage should be completed before a complaint is considered at the next level.

3.0 INFORMAL APPROACH

3.1 Concerns and problems should be resolved when and where they arise through discussion with the relevant staff responsible for the management of the accommodation or service provision. This is where discussions should start and, unless there are exceptional circumstances, there should be full discussion at this informal level. People with problems or complaints will be advised to resolve them through informal discussion before using Rowan Alba's formal complaints procedure.

3.2 RACP13 sets out guidelines for staff on dealing with complaints at this informal stage.

3.3 RACP14 sets out the informal complaints log that must be completed by the staff member, with the Scheme Manager checking and initialling and dating each entry.

3.4 The Scheme Manager must closely monitor the informal complaints logbook on an ongoing basis.

4.0 FIRST STAGE - COMPLAINT TO THE SCHEME OR SERVICE MANAGER (Team leader if they have overall service responsibility)

4.1 If a service user wishes to make a formal complaint they will be asked to complete the Rowan Alba Complaint Form (RACP16). This will be forwarded to the Scheme Manager. See RACP17.

4.2 The Manager will arrange for a meeting to be held with the service user with an appropriate member of staff dependant on the nature of the complaint of at least Team Leader or Manager. However, if a simple apology or provision of information is required only, a written response can be immediately made.

4.3 In the case of serious complaints the Chief Executive themselves must always present at the follow-up meeting.

4.4 A complaints record form will be kept of the meeting. See RACP16. The member of staff should sign this. The report will be forwarded to the Chief Executive.

4.5 A written response will always be sent including the right to take the complaint to the Chief Executive if they are still unhappy with the response or outcome. They should be asked to attempt to state what they would like to occur to resolve the issues.



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- 4.6 If the service user does not turn up for the meeting, this should be noted, but the complaint must still be investigated.
- 4.7 The Project Manager must review the report and be satisfied that the appropriate response and remedial action has been taken.
- 4.8 The Project Manager must closely monitor complaints on an on-going basis. A summary of complaints will be provided on the monthly monitoring report form, and be reported to the Chief Executive.
- 4.9 The complaints file will be regularly reviewed by Head Office.

5.0 SECOND STAGE - APPEAL TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 5.1 This formal stage will be used if the complainant has complained formally to the Senior Support Worker or Service Manager and is not satisfied with the outcome, and wishes to complain to the Chief Executive.
- 5.2 People who need additional help in understanding the documents will be assisted by staff or referred to appropriate translation or advice agencies.
- 5.3 The complainant should write to the Chief Executive informing her / him of her / his dissatisfaction with the outcome of the first stage and intention to proceed to this stage.
- 5.4 The Chief Executive will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and inform the complainant of the date and time of a complaints panel meeting that will be held within 20 days of the date the Chief Executive receives the complaint.
- 5.5 The complaints panel will consist of the Chief Executive and a member of the Management Team. Where possible, the panel will take account of representation of ethnic minorities and gender.
- 5.6 The complainant will be sent necessary documentation and information about the way in which the meeting will be conducted.
- 5.7 The complainant and / or her / his representative may speak to the panel. An interpreter will be provided where requested and where possible. The meeting will be minuted.
- 5.8 The complainant will be given at least 5 working days notice of the meeting. The complaint form, the written decision of the investigating officer (usually by the Senior Support Worker, or Scheme Manager), and any other documentation will be circulated to members of the panel at not less than 5 days before the meeting.



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- 5.9 An investigating officer for the complaint will attend the meeting of the panel together with any other staff that they consider appropriate.
- 5.10 The complainant and / or her / his representative will be invited to speak in support of her / his complaint in order that it can be understood and fully considered. An appropriate member of staff will then present their view of the case. There will be an opportunity for questions of each other by the complainant and the investigating officer and for the panel members to question both. The complainant and the investigating officer will be fully and fairly heard.
- 5.11 When the complaint has been investigated and considered the panel will ask the complainant and the investigating officer to withdraw in order that the panel may come to their decision.
- 5.12 At the conclusion of the investigation all those involved will be sent a letter informing them of the outcome. The letter will set out the Panels decision on the complaint made, the reasons for it, the action taken or proposed, and include a response to any requests made about action that should be taken to resolve the complaint. The letter will state that there is a final appeal to the Management Board.

6. THIRD STAGE: APPEAL TO ROWAN ALBA CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- 6.1 This formal stage will be used if the complainant has complained formally to the Chief Executive and is not satisfied with the outcome and wishes to complain to the Rowan Alba Management Board.
- 6.2 The complainant should write to the Chair of the Management Board informing her / him of her / his dissatisfaction with the outcome of the second stage and intention to proceed to the final stage. The complainant should enclose all relevant papers and information, and attempt to state what they would like to occur to resolve the issues.
- 3. The Management Board will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within working days.
- 6.4 This may be a review of all paperwork and related evidence and / or a specific meeting and / or through telephone discussions.
- 6.5 The complaints panel will consist of, members of the Management Board. The panel will also take account of ethnic minorities and gender, if possible.
- 6.6 The complainant will be sent necessary documentation and information, about how the review will be conducted and timescales, including any specific requests from the complainant for further information.



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- 6.7 The complainant will review the response from the panel within 20 days of receipt of the complaint. The letter will set out the Panel's decision on the complaint made, the reasons for it, the action taken or proposed, and include a response to any requests made about action that should be taken to resolve the complaint.
- 6.8 A letter will state that this is the conclusion of the complaints procedure and include details of what further action, outside of Rowan Alba, the complainant can take if they are dissatisfied with the outcome. This will include reference to the Care Inspectorate, Citizens Advice Bureau, legal advice, partner housing associations, social services or other funders.

7.0 MONITORING

- 7.1 A record of all complaints will include the number of complaints, the time taken to deal with them and the outcome and will record the nationality, ethnic origin, gender of complainants together with information about disability will be collated by Manager as part of their monthly report.
- 7.2 This information will be collated and reported monthly to the Chief Executive and annually by the Rowan Alba Management Board.
- 7.3 All service teams will review complaints trends every quarter.
- 7.4 All managers to regularly spot-check both the central complaints file and individual files to check that the policy and its administration are being followed correctly.

8. COMPLAINING OUTWITH ROWAN ALBA

Rowan Alba is required to comply with the Care Inspectorate. This is a new National organisation established under Act of Scottish Parliament to regulate cares services. It operates independently and has regional offices throughout Scotland.

Rowan Alba is registered with the Care Inspectorate.

The Care Inspectorate works on both a national and local level. Each care Service is registered and issued with a Certificate of Registration. Every year, each service is inspected to ensure standards are maintained. The Care Inspectorate also has a complaints procedure by users of the service. All complaints made to the Care Inspectorate will be thoroughly investigated. Should you wish to contact the Care Inspectorate their number can be found below.

National Office:



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**The Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee DD1 4NY**

**Tel: 01382 207 100
Complaints: 0845 600 9527 (charged at local rate)**

NB. The term “service user” refers to any user of services provided by Rowan Alba Limited, whether or not these are related to the provision of accommodation and includes anyone who in previous policies or publications may have been referred to as a “tenant”, “resident”, “occupant” or “client”.