

## Outline Procedure

We will endeavour to resolve most concerns on an informal basis at the first point of contact. If a complaint is received verbally, and can be resolved within 24 hours or within an agreed short time frame, it will not be logged as a formal complaint.

Rhea Projects will try and contact the customer over a one-month period at different times of the day. After one month a letter will be sent saying that the complaint will not be progressed further.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the initial response received then the stages of the RHEA complaints policy Stage 1: Formal Complaint are outlined.

A manager within RHEA will deal with the complaint and inform the complainant of their decision. The officer will not have been involved in the decision or action against which the complaint is being made, if they are then the matter will be treated as a stage 2 complaint.

Acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint should be provided within 3 working days. RHEA will aim to provide a response to the complainant within 14 working days either via telephone, email, a letter or a face-to-face meeting. If the complaint is going to take longer than this to complete, the complainant will be informed of an anticipated date for response; this may be in the form of an interim letter. The complainant should be advised of any further steps, which they may take if they are not satisfied with the response. These will vary depending upon the nature of the complaint and it will be the responsibility of the person dealing with the stage 2 complaint to advise of the varying appeal avenues. Eg Insurance Ombudsman, Local Authority Complaints Policy, TrustMark, Legal redress etc

RHEA will normally only review complaints if the complainant responds to the response/ decision letter within 28 days, stating why they disagree with the outcome. Where a complainant seeks a review of the outcome of their complaint, RHEA may look at the case again and in light of any new information that may be presented.

## Outline Procedure (continued)

Where the Stage 1 process is considered complete, if appropriate, arrange for the case to be reviewed as a Stage 2 complaint. If after review at stage 2, it is found that it was not relevant to review further the customer will be advised of this. If the matter is considered to be a relevant stage 2 appeal the review should be undertaken by the relevant director. The purpose of Stage 2 is to review the complaint to ensure that the matter was thoroughly investigated at Stage 1 and that the correct decisions were made. The relevant director will provide a response to the complainant within 15 working days either via telephone, email, a letter or a virtual or face-to-face meeting. If the complaint review is going to take longer, then the complainant will be advised of this and informed of an anticipated date for response.

## Vexatious Complaints

RHEA aims to treat all complainants fairly and will, as far as possible, ensure that the substance of any complaint is addressed. However, RHEA also has a duty to effectively manage its own resources and equally as the schemes are subject to public funds by ensuring resources expended on handling complaints are proportionate.

There are a small number of complainants who pursue their complaints in ways that are unreasonable and /or who take up an unwarranted amount of resources. In such circumstances, RHEA may choose to apply the guidance issued by the Local Government Ombudsman. Such action is very rare and not taken lightly and complainants will be informed before any restrictions are applied to them in order that they might moderate their behaviour.

## Finally...

In the unlikely event that you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been dealt with below are links to some helpful organisations.

**Citizens Advice and Trading Standards -**  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-trading-standards)

**Local Government Ombudsman -**  
[www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint)

**Financial Conduct Authority -**  
[www.fca.org.uk/](http://www.fca.org.uk/)

**° COSY HOMES**  
**IN LANCASHIRE**  
Greener Homes. Warmer Homes



## When can a complaint be made?

It is much easier to investigate and respond to customer feedback if it is provided at the time of the event. It can be difficult to fully investigate events if they are not reported at the time due to different circumstances such as; people's memories fade, staff may leave RHEA or the delivery companies or records may no longer be available. For the reasons outlined above, RHEA will normally only accept customer feedback which is provided within twelve months of the incident or circumstances that led to the feedback. This timescale may be different in the case of issues around TrustMark warranties in particular when a company is no longer trading.

## How can a complaint be made?

The Rhea Complaints Policy sets out how a complaint can be made and includes an indication of areas of complaint. This is by no means exhaustive and if in doubt treat the matter as a complaint if it cannot be dealt with within the normal working practices.

To be considered within the Policy the complaint must be about something that RHEA as the managing agent, for Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) has responsibility for, therefore the inclusions and exclusions outlined in the policy are there for guidance.

In some circumstances the Lead Authority for the CHiL delivery may need to be consulted to determine if the complaint is within the remit of the work carried out by RHEA or any delivery company or if the complaint needs to be dealt with another way. For example if the complaint is about the level of funding available towards measures and the complaint needs to be re addressed to another organisation. In which case RHEA staff would assist in signposting to the appropriate organisation following discussion with a manager as to how the issue should be handled and through what channels.

## Where can I make a complaint?

**It will be faster to email your complaint to us:**  
enquiries@rheaprojects.co.uk

**Write to us:**  
Cosy Homes in Lancashire  
Office 8  
Blackburn Technology Management Centre  
Challenge Way  
Blackburn  
BB1 5QB

**Telephone us:** 03306 061 4888

Complaints received anonymously will be considered by RHEA and investigation being proportionate to the potential outcome and severity of the complaint. As there is no potential for feedback the action to be taken would be considered directly by a Rhea company director.

## Complaints Policy in relation to Complaints Procedure

The Complaints Policy sets out a two stage process. Complaints may be capable of being dealt with by front line staff as the first point of contact. The Policy sets out how this may be escalated to stage two and three. However depending upon the nature of the complaint it may be necessary to escalate the issue to stage two or stage three immediately.

**In order to ensure complaints are dealt with appropriately the following details should be provided as a minimum**

- Accurate details of the complainant (name, address, contact number)
- Accurate details of the complaint (what, when, where, what happened etc.)
- Assess nature of complaint i.e. property damage, vehicle parking etc.
- Details of all persons involved

This list may not be wholly comprehensive and accordingly any additional information supplied by the complainant should be provided.

## How we handle your complaint

The nature of the complaint needs assessing to determine if the complaint is something that could be dealt with by RHEA using the policy guidelines.

It is not possible within a procedure to cover the diverse and broad range of complaints that can be made and the potential permutations as to how these can be handled.

There are aspects that are associated with RHEA but may be outside the companies control. An example would be where the issue has been referred to RHEA's insurance company but the issue is taking time to resolve. RHEA may take steps to assist the process but may be unable to bring about direct action. These issues may be referred to the Financial Ombudsman Services. Other examples may be where TrustMark are involved and the complaint centres around timescales that are outside the control of RHEA.

Complaints relating to the disclosure of personal information will be dealt with in consultation with RHEA's Data Protection Officer. In the case of complaints about discrimination, concerning the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, (i.e. age, race, religion or belief, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity) RHEA will take into account its duties under the Act and related to any pertinent information.

