Tenant Compliments, Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Policy

# Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of service delivery by Common Ground Queensland and applies to tenants of all Common Ground Queensland properties.

# The following are not included in the scope of this policy:

* Compliments, complaints, appeals and feedback by persons who are not tenants. These are made as described in the *General Compliments, Appeals and Feedback Policy*.
* General enquiries and requests for information and/or services.
* An incident unless it has led to a complaint (refer *Incident Management and Reporting Procedure*).

# Policy

Common Ground Queensland is committed to facilitating our tenants’ right to raise concerns or register their positive experiences about our service and to appeal a decision we have made that directly affects them.

Common Ground Queensland is committed to having processes for managing tenant issues that are legal, ethical, consistent and systematic. This includes:

* Informing tenants about how to make compliments, complaints and appeals known to appropriate staff;
* Addressing complaints and appeals confidentially and objectively and in a timely and culturally appropriate manner that is respectful to both the complainant and the respondent;
* Ensuring support and advocacy is available, through immediate linking with the Support Provider where required;
* Advising tenants of the outcomes of their formal complaints or appeals (in writing whenever possible) in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth) and *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld);
* Ensuring tenants are not disadvantaged by raising a complaint or questioning a decision;
* Ensuring that the outcomes of formal complaints and appeals become inputs to Common Ground Queensland’s continuous improvement mechanisms;
* Ensuring that the Support Provider is aware and fully understanding of the compliments, complaints and appeals process.

# Definitions

A compliment is an expression of satisfaction with a service or the way the service has been delivered by staff.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with any action, decision or quality of service lodged by a complainant or their representative that requires an official resolution or response. It must relate to a specific occurrence or episode, including the non-delivery of service, which has an impact on the individual complainant.

Feedback is a criticism, comment or suggestion where a response is not sought, or not reasonable to expect.

An appeal is a request to have an official decision reviewed. This may include appealing the outcome of a complaint or other decision made by Common Ground Queensland.

An incident is an event or circumstance, which could have, or did lead to unintended and/or unnecessary harm to a person and/or loss or damage. Incidents are identified and managed by staff as described in the *Incident Management and Reporting Procedure*.

# Tenant rights

A tenant has the right to:

* Have their complaint dealt with confidentially and objectively
* Ask for help in lodging a complaint from the Support Provider or an external advocate. In this case, that organisation can contact CGQ on behalf of the tenant
* Request a support person to accompany them in any meetings
* Use interpreting and translating services
* Be given information on tenant advice and advocacy services
* Lodge an appeal if they are not satisfied with the outcome, and
* Be informed of the outcomes of their complaints in a timely manner.

# Common Ground Queensland’s Responsibilities

Tenant and property manager behaviour in Queensland is governed by housing laws. These laws outline the rights and responsibilities of tenants and property managers.

This means there are situations where our staff can respond directly; and other situations where we have no authority to respond because it is the responsibility of external organisations such as the police or council. In the latter situations, all we can do is try to influence the best possible outcome.

Common Ground Queensland would also like to acknowledge that we have no responsibility for matters that occur within a tenant’s private unit, unless they impact other tenants quality of life.

What we are responsible for:

* Rent payments and utility arrangements
* Maintenance of units and common areas
* Cleanliness, condition and security of the building
* Assisting tenants to sustain their tenancy
* Referring tenants in need of support to the Support Provider

What we can do:

* Use Sustaining Tenancy Plans and/or Acceptable Behaviour Agreements to work with tenants and their behavioural issues
* Take formal action in accordance with the Rental Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act (2008) Act in relation to on-going and repeated behavioural issues
* Take action to end a tenancy when behaviour is dangerous.
* Assist in maintaining safety in the building through visitor management systems

What we are not responsible for:

* Anti-social behaviour of a criminal nature including theft, violence or threats of violence
* Drug or alcohol use in units
* Disturbances or issues that occur outside the building

What we can’t do:

* Resolve tenant to tenant disputes
* Control on-going noise disturbances from tenants, visitors or pets
* Interfere with the personal beliefs, habits, circumstances or attitudes of individual tenants

What we can influence:

* General behaviour where it affects others in the community
* Engagement with tenants to identify issues and provide opportunities to work together to develop solutions to improve their housing.

**Who to contact for matters outside of Common Ground Queensland’s jurisdiction**

* **If you believe that you are in immediate and urgent danger from being harmed or subjected to criminal activity, we strongly encourage you to call Queensland Police Service at 000.**
* For matters regarding the use of drugs, alcohol and illegal substances, please call the Queensland Police Service through PoliceLink at **131 444.**
* For matters regarding theft and other kinds of criminal activity within the building, please call the Queensland Police Service through PoliceLink at **131 444.**
* If you have a complaint regarding excessive noise from music, loud stereos, parties and rowdy behaviour from tenants or visitors, please call the Queensland Police Service through PoliceLink at **131 444.**
* For matters related to barking dogs, please report the issue to Brisbane City Council by phone at **07 3403 3888.**

# External Organisations

If a tenant is not satisfied with an appeal decision made by the CEO, tenants can contact an external organisation for assistance in resolving their issue. Different external organisations serve different purposes and it can be challenging to navigate this space. Refer to the *Tenant Compliments, Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Procedure* or *Fact Sheet* for more information.

# Related Documents

Tenant Compliments, Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Procedure

Tenant Compliments, Complaints, Appeals and Feedback Fact Sheet

Incident Management and Reporting Procedure

Good Neighbour Charter

Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure

Starting a Tenancy Procedure

Tenancy Management (Residential) Procedure

Supportive Housing Policy