



Operational Policy and Procedure

POLICY: Tenant Complaint Process Policy

DATE: January 2012

As part of a commitment to delivering quality services to tenants, the Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation has developed and implemented a transparent, accessible tenant complaint process.

INTRODUCTION:

The Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation (GSHC) expects that in the normal course of business, there will be occasions where tenants do not feel that they have received adequate services, or that there are other issues that should be further addressed by GSHC. These circumstances are to be expected in a service delivery business. GSHC will endeavour to meet and exceed the standards of service delivery, and to respond to tenants promptly where concerns have been raised.

The tenant complaint process is not intended to replace the normal interactions that will occur between tenants and staff, and is not intended to be used prior to an issue first being raised with staff responsible for the particular area.

PURPOSE:

GSHC expects that in the course of delivering services to tenants there will be complaints made about these services or about the manner in which the services were delivered. GSHC is committed to establishing processes to ensure that these complaints are heard, the facts of the complaint established, and where required, that remedial actions are undertaken.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the tenant complaint process are to:

- Provide a simple process which is accessible to all;
- Provide a method of resolution of complaints about GSHC services, harassment, or perceived inequity of treatment of tenants by the housing provider;

- Provide a formal mechanism for review of management decisions that tenants do not feel are reasonable. The process is not intended to replace, review or override final decisions of the Internal Review Committee with respect to the decision requirements of the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 (SHRA);
- Ensure that all complaints are resolved in a timely fashion;
- Track and resolve complaints;
- Use the resolution of complaints as learning in the development of future policies, practices, and;
- Create a process that supports the normal management structures of GSHC and respects the authority and accountability of the GSHC.

DEFINITION:

Defining a tenant complaint is not difficult. Any event or action that leads to tenant dissatisfaction is the basis for complaints. More complicated is defining when a routine matter becomes a complaint for the purposes of the tenant complaint process. For the purposes of this process, complaints are generally defined as:

- Requests for maintenance to which GSHC staff has not responded in a timely fashion
- Actions on tenancy-related matters to which GSHC staff has not responded in a timely fashion
- Events and/or issues that may be an infringement of tenant rights under legislation or GSHC policies governing the conduct of staff and tenants, tenant representatives, human rights and harassment

APPLICATION OF THIS PROCESS:

The tenant complaint process applies to all GSHC tenants. GSHC Management will ensure that the principles and practices of this process are followed. In all cases, however, tenants should seek to resolve issues directly with appropriate GSHC staff. Tenants can seek remedies as outlined in this process only when all attempts to resolve issues directly with GSHC staff are exhausted.

PRINCIPLES:

The Tenant Complaint Process has been developed based on the following principles:

- The GSHC is responsible for ensuring that tenants have the ability to raise a complaint through an open and accessible process and to have it addressed in a timely manner.
- Tenants have the right to quality property management services in a discrimination-free environment.

- Staff should have the opportunity to address a complaint about a service or decision they have applied.
- Tenants have the right to appeal a decision made by GSHC staff.
- Tenants have the right to timely resolution of their complaint.
- Tenants and staff will be informed of the process and the outcome of the complaint.
- Complaints and complaint resolution will be tracked and made available to the tenant community when such complaint involves a policy, procedure, or practice which affects the entire tenant community.
- A communication and education program will be implemented to ensure that all tenants and all staff are informed of their rights and responsibilities under this process.

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Tenant Complaint Process

Service Delivery Issues

1. Tenant informs GSHC staff of the specific complaint. All complaints will only be initiated for a review and investigation once the complaint is received in writing.
2. GSHC staff upon receiving a written complaint will begin investigating the complaint within one day.
3. In the event a complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved, the tenant will have the ability to address the matter to Senior Management or Department head of GSHC.
4. GSHC staff responsible for responding to the complaint will respond within 10 working days of receipt in writing. In the event that the complaint cannot be resolved, GSHC staff will inform the tenant of the anticipated time it will take to resolve the complaint. In all cases, the tenant will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days of the decision being made.

Human Rights or Harassment Complaints that Involve GSHC Staff

1. Where a tenant has a complaint related to human rights or harassment that involves a GSHC staff person, this complaint can be made in writing directly to the Chair of the Board.
2. The GSHC Board Chair will respond to the tenant complaint within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.