



## Complaints

During the past year 4 residents have not been content with the response we have provided to their complaints and have requested that their complaints be reviewed at the Independent Appeal Stage. At this stage a panel made up of board members and a TVH Director, who has not been involved in the complaint, receives a report prepared by TVH about the complaint and they listen to the resident present their complaint in person. The panel then considers the complaint and how we have tried to resolve it and makes a decision about the complaint.

Some residents have felt that this is not an independent process. The Housing Ombudsman has confirmed that our process follows their recommended best practice. But in order to demonstrate the independent approach taken by the panels, below are some examples of the complaints considered and outcomes following appeal hearings during the past year.

- A group of neighbours complained that our computer-generated service charge statement did not conform with their leases. We had offered to provide manual statements at an additional cost, to address the additional time it would take to produce the statements. The panel disagreed with us and decided that, because their leases were non-standard, we should provide a manual statement and that the format of the statement should be agreed with the group of residents.
- The same group wanted us to commission an audit of service charge complaints. The panel did not uphold this request because the TVH resident auditors were completing an audit of service charges, and were programmed to complete an audit of complaints during 2010.

- A leaseholder complained that the cleaning and gardening on her estate had deteriorated, and that we had not done anything about this. The panel felt that the association had responded and services had improved. However they agreed that the improvement had been too slow and awarded the leaseholder a refund of 25% of the gardening and cleaning cost over a 7 month period.
- A tenant suffered a leak following a repair carried out by Mears. The leak caused a lot of damage to the walls, floor and contents of the sitting room. TVH's insurance covered the drying out and redecoration of the house, but we felt that the carpets and contents should be covered by the tenant's home contents insurance. The panel upheld the tenant's complaint in full because we should have accepted liability on behalf of Mears and settled the tenant's claim. The panel instructed us to settle the claim and pursue Mears for reimbursement. Training has been given to relevant staff regarding responding to emergencies and insurance claims.
- A tenant complained because the defects in the communal areas where he lived were not being addressed. The developer was in financial difficulties, had not completed the development, had no funds to complete the defects and the management company was not obliged to take over the estate services until the development was fully completed. The panel's decision was that we should commission specialist reports on the various aspects of the property which were not satisfactory, and arrange for Quadron to carry out estate services until the management company took over. This has been done.
- A tenant complained that we were not responding to his many complaints sufficiently quickly and that we were imposing restrictions on his contact with us. The panel instructed us to carefully manage the tenant's contact, and publish a "vexatious complainer" policy to ensure that no resident can take up a disproportionate amount of officer time, to the detriment of our service to all of our residents.
- A tenant complained that we had contacted 3<sup>rd</sup> parties without his consent. The panel concluded that that it was not clear whether the tenant paperwork gave officers the required permissions, and recommended some amendments to tenant documentation and 3<sup>rd</sup> party contact arrangements, and that confidential information handling training take place. This has been completed.