

# Hunter Community Housing - Feedback and Complaints Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This procedure outlines how Hunter Community Housing (HCH) manages complaints in a fair, respectful, timely, and effective manner, consistent with the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (Diocese) [Complaints Resolution Policy](#) and [Procedure](#), the [National Regulatory System for Community Housing \(NRSCH\) National Regulatory Code](#) requirements and the [Centrepay Terms of Use](#) requirements as an approved provider to receive payments through Centrepay in respect of people who receive instalments of Centrelink payments.

(2) These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the Diocese [Complaints Resolution Policy](#).

## Section 2 - Scope

(3) This procedure applies to:

- a. all Diocesan workers who receive or manage complaints on behalf of Hunter Community Housing, and
- b. to tenants, applicants, service users, and members of the public who wish to provide feedback or make a complaint about Hunter Community Housing services.

## Section 3 - Guiding Principles

(4) The guiding principles for responding to and managing complaints on behalf of Hunter Community Housing are:

- a. Respect and dignity for all complainants.
- b. Accessibility - Clear, simple and easy to use complaints process.
- c. No detriment - Complainants will not be disadvantaged for raising concerns.
- d. Timeliness - Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 business days and resolved within 20 business days, where practicable.
- e. Confidentiality - Personal information will be handled in accordance with applicable Privacy legislation.
- f. Continuous Improvement - Complaint data will be used to improve services.
- g. Compliance with Centrepay Terms of Use and the NRSCH complaint handling standards.

### Making a Complaint

(5) Complaints may be made:

- a. In writing:
  - i. using the link to the [complaints form](#) on the [Hunter Community Housing Website](#).
  - ii. by sending an email to [Contactus@huntercommunityhousing.org.au](mailto:Contactus@huntercommunityhousing.org.au).
  - iii. by sending a letter to PO Box 775, Newcastle West, NSW 2302.

iv. verbally by phone or in person to any Hunter Community Housing office location.

(6) Complainants may nominate a representative to act on their behalf.

## **Complaints Handling Process**

### **Receipt and Acknowledgement**

(7) All complaints are to be logged in the Diocesan centralised complaint management system (mnResponse) and acknowledged within three (3) business days.

(8) Where a complainant submits a complaint by any means other than through mnResponse, the worker receiving the complaint is responsible for entering the complaint into mnResponse on behalf of the complainant. If an email address is provided, an automated acknowledgement can be sent to the complainant.

### **Triage**

(9) The Complaints Management Service conducts triage and risk assessment, and determines a resolution pathway.

(10) The complaint is to be assigned to Hunter Community Housing for initial resolution.

### **Resolution**

(11) The assigned manager is to identify any immediate issues and attempt resolution at first contact.

(12) Where the complaint cannot be resolved at first contact, the assigned manager will take steps to:

- a. identify and resolve any information gaps,
- b. liaise with and follow the direction of operational leadership in the management of the issue,
- c. seek general internal or external specialist advice where it is beneficial to do so, or
- d. escalate to a more senior manager for a decision, if unable to resolve.

### **Response**

(13) After completion of the steps to address the complaint, a written response is to be provided where practicable.

### **Referral to the diocesan Complaints Management Service**

(14) A complaint may be referred to the Diocesan Complaint management service when the options for resolution by Hunter Community Housing have been exhausted and the complaint is not resolved.

(15) A complaint may be referred to the Diocesan Complaints Management Service before options for resolution by Hunter Community Housing are exhausted, where:

- a. there is a sufficiently serious actual or perceived conflict of interest involving leadership;
- b. the complainant has a concern of possible reprisal or a belief that Hunter Community Housing will not properly address the complaint;
- c. the complaint is about the conduct of a senior leader in Hunter Community Housing or the Diocese; and
- d. involving Hunter Community Housing may present a risk to the integrity of an investigation.

### **Closure**

(16) The complainant must be informed of the outcome.

(17) The electronic record must be updated and the outcome recorded.

(18) Records related to the complaint are to be attached to the complaint record as file notes and are stored securely within the system.

(19) Roles and Permissions assigned to users determine access to records.

### **Appeals**

(20) Complainants can lodge an appeal when they are dissatisfied with a decision made by Hunter Community Housing.

(21) Appeals are handled in accordance with the [Hunter Community Housing Appeals Policy](#).

### **Centrepay Terms of Use Clause Compliance**

(22) Complaints related to Centrepay must be resolved within 20 business days, and records must be retained for 7 years.

### **NRSCH Compliance**

(23) Complaints must be handled in accordance with NRSCH performance outcomes and standards.

### **Serious or repeated complaints**

(24) Serious or repeated complaints must be escalated to the Diocese within five (5) business days.

### **Privacy Complaints**

(25) Complaints involving privacy breaches or requests to access/correct personal information will be managed in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#) and the [Privacy Act 1988](#). Serious or repeated privacy complaints must be reported to the Diocesan Governance team within five (5) business days.

### **Unreasonable Conduct**

(26) An assessment of whether a complainant's conduct is unreasonable is to be made case-by-case in accordance with the Diocese [Complaints Resolution Policy](#).

(27) Where a complainant's behaviour is unreasonable, Hunter Community Housing may set limits on future contact, issue written warnings, or refer to external support or mediation services.

### **Continuous Improvement**

(28) Hunter Community Housing may:

- a. use complaints data to improve its complaints resolution service delivery continuously;
- b. respond to feedback arising from a complaint or administrative inquiry by implementing identified systemic or operational improvements;
- c. implement feedback from a person making a complaint about their experience of the complaint resolution process.

(29) Complaint data will be reviewed quarterly to identify trends and inform service improvements.

## Recordkeeping

(30) All complaints and related correspondence will be retained for at least 7 years. Records must be auditable and include details of complaints, actions taken, outcomes, and any escalations or referrals. This includes complaints related to Centrepay, as per the Centrepay Terms of Use.

## Reporting and Review

(31) Serious or repeated complaints must be escalated to the Diocese within five (5) business days. Complaint data will be reviewed quarterly to identify trends and inform service improvements. This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or upon legislative or organisational change.

# Section 4 - Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Operational leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure governance and oversight of the complaints management process.</li><li>• Approve and endorse the complaints framework and related procedures.</li><li>• Monitor compliance with legislative and diocesan requirements.</li><li>• Review systemic issues and trends to inform continuous improvement.</li></ul>
Assigned Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement the complaints procedure within their area of responsibility.</li><li>• Acknowledge and assess complaints promptly and fairly.</li><li>• Coordinate inquiries and ensure accurate documentation.</li><li>• Communicate outcomes to complainants and escalate unresolved matters as required.</li></ul>
Diocesan workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Follow the complaints procedure when receiving or handling complaints.</li><li>• Report complaints to their manager or through designated channels.</li><li>• Maintain confidentiality and treat all parties respectfully.</li><li>• Participate in inquiries when requested and provide relevant information.</li></ul>
diocesan Complaints Management Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide centralised support for complaint handling across diocesan entities.</li><li>• Maintain the complaints register and ensure accurate record-keeping.</li><li>• Offer guidance and training on complaints management processes.</li><li>• Escalate serious or systemic complaints to governance bodies and external authorities where required.</li></ul>

# Section 5 - Document Review

(32) This procedure will be reviewed when there is a legislative change, organisational change, delegation change, technology change or at least every 3 years to ensure it continues to be current and effective.

# Section 6 - Related Documents

(33) The following related documents support the implementation of this procedure:

(34) [Diocese Complaints Resolution Policy](#)

(35) [Diocese Complaints Resolution Procedure](#)

(36) [Hunter Community Housing Appeals Policy](#)

(37) [Diocese Complaints Brochure](#)

(38) [Diocese Dispute Resolution Brochure](#)



## Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	9th February 2026
Review Date	9th February 2029
Approval Authority	Chief Governance Officer
Approval Date	9th February 2026
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Megan Grainger Chief Governance Officer
Enquiries Contact	Hunter Community Housing

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Complaint"** - An expression of dissatisfaction made to or about the Diocese, the services the Diocese offers, a diocesan worker or the handling of a complaint where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required. A complaint is not a request for service, an expression of concern, opinion, or feedback where a response is not explicitly or implicitly expected. A matter that may not be considered a complaint as defined by the policy may be recorded and referred to the appropriate operational leadership for management.

**"Complainant"** - The person who makes the complaint. The complainant may be the person who suffered the alleged inappropriate conduct or poor service or a person acting on another person's behalf for example, the responsible person for a child (e.g. parent) or vulnerable person (e.g. appointed guardian).

**"Conflict of interest"** - Also known as a conflict of duty refers to situations where a conflict arises between a public or professional duty and a private interest or duty owed to another organisation or group (including volunteering). This conflict could influence the performance of official duties and responsibilities. Such conflict generally involves opposing principles or incompatible wishes or needs. Conflicts of interests can be:

- Actual - involves direct conflict between your current duties and responsibilities and existing private interests; or
- Potential - where a person has a private interest that could interfere with the performance of their official duties and responsibilities in the future; or
- Reasonably perceived - where a reasonable person could perceive that your private interests are, or are likely to, improperly influence the performance of your duties, irrespective of whether this is the fact.

**"Complaint management service"** - The diocesan service provided by Governance that is dedicated to the resolution of complaints and includes:

- Resolution Officers who have an impartial, facilitative, and supportive role in the resolution of complaints at the Agency, and
- Administrative Review Officers who may be allocated to finalise a complaint by the completion of an Administrative Inquiry.

**"Complaint management system"** - All policies, procedures and practices used by the Diocese in the management of complaints.

**"Privacy legislation"** - Relevant legislation that protects the handling of personal information about individuals including but not limited to:

- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Australian Privacy Principles
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- Information Protection Principles (IPPs)
- Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW); and
- Health Privacy Principles (HPPs).