An tÚdarás Rialála Comhlachtaí Tithíochta Ceadaithe

Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority

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AHBRA Complaints Policy

Policy Reference: CP 002

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AHBRA Complaints Policy

1. Context

The Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority ("AHBRA") was established in February 2021 to oversee the effective governance, financial management and performance of all Approved Housing Bodies, in accordance with the legal framework set out in the Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019 ("the Act").

AHBRA is committed to providing services to its stakeholders in accordance with the Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service of the Public Service, as well as the guidance provided by the Ombudsman.

We welcome comments, suggestions and complaints about our performance and conduct in the discharge of our statutory duties and responsibilities. We regard complaints as opportunities to review practice, procedures and identify areas for improvement.

This policy relates to complaints directly concerning the quality of service provided by AHBRA. This policy does not cover concerns raised relating to the conduct of AHBs, nor complaints about the outcome of AHBRA regulatory decisions or activities where there are statutory mechanisms in place to make representations or appeals.

2. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out how we will approach complaints relating to conduct and performance of AHBRA and our staff in the provision of services. The policy aims to ensure that complaints are handled fairly, promptly and in line with best practice guidance.

3. Principles

Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction by a person or organisation about AHBRA's action, lack of action, or the standard of service provided, where a response or action is reasonably sought.

Complainant: The person or organisation making the complaint. A third-party complainant is someone acting on behalf of the person affected (with consent or appropriate standing).

AHBRA will:

- Treat complainants with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- Ensure complaints are handled impartially and consistently.
- Aim to resolve complaints at the earliest opportunity.
- Keep complainants informed of progress and outcomes.
- Use learning from complaints to improve services.

4. Informal resolution

We aim to resolve most complaints through early resolution at the point of service delivery. This may result in an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem. If it is not possible to resolve your complaint informally within five working days, you may wish to submit a formal complaint to AHBRA's Complaint Officer.

5. How to make a formal complaint to AHBRA

You can make a complaint in any of the ways below:

1. You can email AHBRA's Complaint Officer at **complaints@ahbregulator.ie**
2. You can contact AHBRA's Complaint Officer by telephone by calling **01 224 3900** and asking to speak to the Complaints Officer
3. You can write a letter with the details of your complaint to our office address: **Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority, 4th Floor Grattan House, 67-72 Mount Street Lower, Dublin 2, D02 H638.** Please mark all postal correspondence related to complaints as "Strictly Private & Confidential - for the attention of the Complaints Officer".

5.1. What to include in a formal complaint:

- Please state your name, telephone number, email and/or postal address, as appropriate. Anonymous complaints will only be considered if there is sufficient information to allow investigation.

- Provide a brief description of your complaint (include dates, times and reference numbers, if possible) and your desired outcome (for example, receipt of an apology).
- Please inform us of your preferred method of communication.

If possible, please include any other information and/or copies of relevant correspondence/ documents that you think may assist the Complaints Officer in resolving your complaint.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the action giving rise to the complaint. Complaints should normally be submitted within 30 days of the date the complainant became aware of the issue. AHBRA will consider submissions outside this period in exceptional circumstances (for example, where the complainant could not reasonably be expected to have become aware of the issue earlier). Requests for acceptance beyond the time limit will be considered on a case-by-case basis and reasons recorded.

You have a right to appoint an advocate to assist you in making a complaint and to provide support during the complaint process. If you require such assistance, please inform us and we will provide contact information for an advocacy or support service who may be able assist you.

6. How your complaint will be handled by AHBRA

The Complaints Officer will formally acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days, setting out the intended process for handling your complaint based on the information provided by you. The Complaints Officer will also ask how you would like AHBRA to communicate with you (for example, by email or post) and whether you have any requirements for communication, for example language difficulties.

AHBRA will deal with your complaint in an open and honest way. No individual will be penalised for making a complaint to AHBRA.

6.1. Investigation

The Complaints Officer will keep you informed of who will investigate your complaint and is the single point of contact for the complainant.

Staff who are the subject of a complaint must not investigate it or make the final decision on the complaint. Where a conflict exists, the matter will be allocated to an alternative investigator or external reviewer.

If a resolution is found to your complaint, keeping in mind your preferred outcome as communicated in your complaint, the Complaints Officer will contact you and ask whether you are satisfied with the proposed resolution.

AHBRA aims to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, within 30 working days.

If your complaint is more complex, the Complaints Officer will:

- Let you know within 30 working days why the complaint may take longer to investigate
- Clarify how long AHBRA expects the investigation to take
- Provide you with regular updates on any progress made.

6.2. Outcome

If an investigation takes place regarding your complaint, the Complaints officer will let you know of the outcome by your preferred form of communication. If necessary, a longer report may be produced. How and why the conclusion was reached will be explained to you. If a fault in AHBRA's systems or procedures is identified, you will be told what it is and how AHBRA will implement the necessary changes to prevent a reoccurrence of the issue.

Where a complaint is upheld (in whole or part), remedies may include:

- An apology.
- An explanation of what happened and why.
- A commitment to corrective action and an action plan.
- Financial redress where appropriate and lawful.
- All remedial actions will be clearly recorded and tracked to completion.

6.3. Accessibility Assistance

In accordance with the Section 26(2) of the Disability Act 2005, AHBRA has appointed an Access Officer. Our Access Officer is responsible for providing or arranging for assistance and guidance to persons with disabilities accessing public services.

Should you, or a person you are acting on behalf of, require assistance in providing feedback or making a complaint, you should contact the Access Officer, who will try to assist you. For queries relating to access, please contact info@ahbregulator.ie.

6.4. Office of the Ombudsman

If you are not satisfied that AHBRA has resolved your complaint, you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent, free to use and can assess your complaint.

Contact details for the Ombudsman are available at www.ombudsman.ie.

Alternatively, you can contact the office by post: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, St. Kevin's, Dublin 2, D02W773.

Or by phone: 01 636 5600.

7. Responsibilities and Reporting

In order to improve the performance of our services, and to reduce the likelihood of recurring issues, the Complaints Officer will maintain an anonymised and confidential record of all feedback and complaints received. Learnings may be used for internal training purposes. Managers at all levels are responsible for fostering a climate of quality service and continuous improvement based on feedback/complaint learnings.

All personal information received by AHBRA in relation to a complaint will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2014. For further details on how AHBRA processes your personal data, please see AHBRA's **Privacy Statement**.

Feedback and complaints provide a measure of stakeholder satisfaction and a basis from which to improve services. The Complaints Officer will report to the C.E.O. on a regular basis regarding feedback and complaints, and to the Board as appropriate.

8. Vexatious Complaints

We believe all correspondents and complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. The staff of AHBRA are entitled to these same rights and therefore any vexatious, unreasonably persistent, or aggressive behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated.

9. Document control – Change and Review History

Issue Date	Issue	Author	Approver	Reason for Change
10/11/2021	CP 001	Governance Committee Secretary	Governance Committee (disbanded)	Policy creation
23/09/2025	CP 002	Complaints Officer	C.E.O.	Change to bring complaints policy in line with the guidance of the Ombudsman