



Complaints

Status:	Approved
Classification:	Public
Version Number:	0.3
Owner:	Corporate Director Neighbourhoods
Approver:	Tenant Services Committee
Approval Date:	01/03/2022
Review Date:	03/02/2025

*This document is available in Welsh and other formats upon request.
Please contact the Communications & Media Team – comms@trivallis.co.uk*

Any printed copies of this document are not controlled.

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	When to use this Policy	3
3.0	Have you asked us yet?	3
4.0	Roles and responsibilities.....	3
5.0	Definitions and Principles	5
5.1	What is a complaint?.....	5
5.2	A complaint is not:.....	5
6.0	How to express concern or complain.....	5
7.0	Dealing with your concern	6
7.1	Safeguarding.....	6
7.2	Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints	6
8.0	Our Complaints Process.....	7
8.1	Stage 1 – Informal Resolution.....	7
8.2	Stage 2 – Formal Internal Investigation	7
9.0	How the complaint will be Investigated.....	7
9.1	Resolving Complaints crossing more than one team.	8
9.2	Receiving anonymous Complaints.....	8
10.0	The investigation outcome.....	8
11.0	Putting Things Right	9
12.0	The Ombudsman.....	9
13.0	Learning Lessons	9
14.0	What if you need help?.....	10
15.0	What we expect from you	10
16.0	Additional information	11
16.1	Monitoring	11
16.2	Related legislation and documents	11
16.3	Customer involvement	11

1.0 Introduction

Trivallis is committed to dealing effectively with any concerns or complaints you may have about our services. We aim to clarify any issues you may be unsure about.

If possible, we'll put right any mistakes we may have made. We will provide any service you're entitled to which we have failed to deliver. If we did something wrong, we'll apologise and, where possible, try to put things right for you. We aim to learn from our mistakes and use the information we gain from complaints to improve our services.

2.0 When to use this Policy

When you express your concerns or complain to us, we will usually respond in the way we explain below. However, sometimes you may have a statutory right of appeal. For example, a refusal to grant you a mutual exchange or the decision not to give you permission to make a home improvement so, rather than investigate your concern, we will explain to you how you can appeal.

Sometimes, you might be concerned about matters that are not covered by this policy. For example, reporting a neighbour dispute and we will then advise you about how to make your concerns known.

This policy does not apply to 'Freedom of Information' or data access issues. Please contact our Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@trivallis.co.uk.

Our Complaint Co-ordinators can advise on the type and scope of complaints we can consider.

3.0 Have you asked us yet?

If you are approaching us for a service for the first time (e.g., reporting a repair, requesting an appointment, reporting a neighbour dispute etc.), then this policy doesn't apply. You should first give us a chance to respond to your request. If you make a request for a service, and then are not happy with our response, you will be able to make your concern known as we describe below.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

In order to fulfil its responsibilities, the following personnel are responsible to ensure Trivallis meet its objectives:

Role	Responsibilities
Corporate Director Neighbourhoods	Has overall responsibility for complaint handling Is responsible for ensuring complaint information is reported through to the appropriate committee & Board
Corporate Directors	Updating Policy & Procedure in line with action plan recommendations for service area

Senior Lead Customer Services	<p>Is the complaints lead for Trivallis:</p> <p>Responsible for the operational management of complaints and maintains an up-to-date database for complaints</p> <p>Maintains a record of all action plans and changes in practice resulting from complaints and obtaining progress reports on actions at regular intervals</p> <p>Providing a progress report on action plans to the Tenant Action Panel</p> <p>Provides information to the Ombudsman</p> <p>Provides monthly reports on complaints data and service improvements to Senior Managers</p>
Complaint Co-ordinators	<p>Co-ordinate any complaints and where appropriate, co-ordinate joint complaints providing a single integrated complaint response.</p> <p>In such cases liaise with other investigating officers and agree who will take the lead in coordinating investigations and sending out the final response.</p> <p>Decide when a complaint requires a response from another organisation advising the complainant where their complaint should go and send their complaint to the right organisation with their agreement.</p> <p>Reviews quality of complaint responses and removes any jargon</p>
Investigating Officers	<p>Ensures responses are received at least 2 days prior to the deadline to allow sufficient time for review. Liaises with Trivallis complaints team and ensure that the investigation is completed within the agreed timescale</p> <p>Are responsible for writing draft complaint responses and addressing all the concerns raised</p> <p>Responsible for attending meetings with the complainant, when requested and for any action plans to be drawn up because of the complaint</p> <p>To investigate the subject of the complaint and provide a fair, accurate, comprehensive report of their investigation within the agreed timescale</p>
Tenant Action Panel	<p>Monitor complaints performance and action plans</p> <p>Share lessons learnt on website</p>
Tenant “Influencer” Working Group “Influencers”	<p>Work alongside the Senior Lead to monitor trends of complaints received and recommend changes to service delivery</p> <p>Review case studies for service improvement and recommends changes required to Tenant Action Panel</p>

Departmental Senior Leads	<p>Responsible for implementation of any action plan arising from a complaint relating to their area of responsibility</p> <p>Provides the Senior Lead Customer Services with progress reports on action plan completions</p> <p>Reviews complaint information to improve performance and increase customer satisfaction</p>
Trivallis staff	<p>Are responsible for knowing how to contact the Trivallis complaints team and for responding to expressions of dissatisfaction about a policy or a service provided</p>

5.0 Definitions and Principles

5.1 What is a complaint?

- An expression of dissatisfaction or concern
- Written or spoken or made by any other communication method
- Made by one or more members of the public (someone or a group in receipt of or denied a service to which they are entitled by Trivallis)
- About Trivallis action or lack of action or the standard of service provided
- Something which requires a response

5.2 A complaint is not:

- A first request for service such as reporting a repair.
- An appeal against a ‘properly made’ decision by a public body.
- A means to seek change to legislation or a ‘properly made’ policy decision.
- A means for lobbying groups/organisations to look to promote a cause.

6.0 How to express concern or complain

You can express your concern in any of the following ways:

- You can get in touch with our Customer Services Team on 03000 030 888
- You can speak with any member of staff. Tell them that you want us to deal with your concern formally
- You can email us at Customerservices@trivallis.co.uk
- You can use our form on the Contact Us section of our Website at www.Trivallis.co.uk
- You can write to us at: Complaints and Concerns, Trivallis, Ty Pennant, Mill Street, Pontypridd, CF37 2SW

The policy and associated forms will be translated to further languages if required.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for those persons wishing to complain who are living with disabilities.

This will include, for example, the policy and associated forms being made available in large print / audio recording

7.0 Dealing with your concern

- All complaints are logged, and an acknowledgement is made on the same working day.
- We will make personal contact within 2 working days from the receipt of the complaint. At the point of acknowledgement, we will provide details of our complaint process and a reference number.
- We will also ask you to tell us how you would like us to communicate with you and establish whether you have any requirements. For example, if you need documents in large print, or a different language.
- We will deal with your concern in an open and honest way.

Normally, we will only be able to look at your concerns if you tell us about them within 6 months. This is because it's better to investigate your concerns while the issues are still fresh in everyone's mind.

We may in exceptional circumstances look at concerns which are brought to our attention later than this. However, we will ask you to explain why you have not been able to bring it to our attention earlier and we will need to have sufficient information about the issue to allow us to consider it properly. In any event, we will not consider any concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago.

If you're expressing a concern on behalf of somebody else, we will need their agreement you will be acting on their behalf.

7.1 Safeguarding

Any concerns which relate to a vulnerable person or child, and those who might be at risk will be investigated and acted upon immediately in line with our Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy.

Reporting such concerns to our Safeguarding Hub by emailing Safeguarding@Trivallis.co.uk

7.2 Unreasonable and Vexatious Complaints

There may be circumstances when a complainant persists in pursuing a Complaint (or series of Complaints) when Trivallis has taken all reasonable actions in response, or where another recognised process should be (or has been) undertaken.

In such cases, the Senior Lead Customer Services will prepare a written briefing for the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods. This report will summarise the history of the complainant's contact with Trivallis and will also make a recommendation for action, which may include:

- Informing the complainant that no further action can be taken by Trivallis in response to their Complaints and telling them that only new or substantive issues will receive a further

response.

- Nominating a single point of contact for any future communication
- Violent or abusive behaviour towards our staff will not be tolerated. Please refer to Trivallis Unacceptable Behaviour Procedure for more information.

8.0 Our Complaints Process

Our complaints process has been streamlined into two stages.

We will support our customers and empower them to make their complaint effectively. We will provide support to our staff to enable them to deal with complaints in a sensitive, professional, and constructive manner.

8.1 Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

This stage offers the opportunity for our informal engagement to resolve the complaint at the time the concern arises or very shortly thereafter. This stage will aim for us to provide an explanation or other appropriate remedial action to remedy the complaint.

We aim to respond to informal resolutions within 10 working days.

8.2 Stage 2 – Formal Internal Investigation

If you are not satisfied with the outcome from the **Informal Resolution Stage** you can request to progress your complaint to our **Formal Investigation Stage**, which will be investigated by a senior staff member.

“Investigate once, investigate well” is the principle for this stage of the process to ensure that the facts of the case are established.

All formal investigations will be logged into our complaints system.

Where any element of the Complaint is upheld either in part or in full, the response will include a full apology and details of remedial action taken.

We aim to respond to Formal Internal Investigations within 20 working days.

9.0 How the complaint will be Investigated

We will let you know the name of the staff member who we have identified to investigate your concern or complaint.

If your concern is straightforward, we will ask a staff member from the relevant service area to investigate and respond to you.

If you have raised more serious concerns, we may use staff from a different service area in Trivallis or, in certain cases, we may appoint an independent investigator.

We will set out our understanding of your concerns and ask you to confirm that we have understood.

We will also ask you to tell us what outcome you're hoping for.

The person looking at your complaint will need to access files we hold relevant to your

complaint. If you don't want this to happen, it's important that you let us know.

If there is a swift solution to your problem, we may discuss how we can resolve the issue promptly rather than undertake a full investigation.

If the complaint is of sufficient complexity, we will:

- Send a holding letter explaining the reasons for the delay
- Tell you how long we expect it to take.
- Provide regular updates on our progress updates, including if any developments might change our original estimate.

The person who is investigating your concerns will firstly aim to establish the facts. The extent of the investigation will depend upon how complex and how serious the issues you have raised are. In complex cases, we will draw up an investigation plan.

In some instances, we may ask to meet with you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we might suggest mediation or another method to try to resolve disputes.

We will look at any relevant evidence. This could include information you have provided, our case files, notes of conversations, letters, emails or whatever else may be relevant to your particular concern. If necessary, we will talk to the staff or others involved and look at our policies, any legal entitlement and good practice guidance.

9.1 Resolving Complaints crossing more than one team.

Complaints requiring the co-operation of more than one team to resolve, will be treated as one complaint.

The complaint will be coordinated by our Complaints Team to ensure the response concludes all aspects of the complaint received.

Where a third-party supplies services on our behalf, Trivallis will use its own Complaint Policy to ensure the investigation is conducted in line with our service standards.

If a complaint relates to the local authority or an external company, the details of the complaint will be referred to the organisation and the complainant informed.

9.2 Receiving anonymous Complaints

Our Complaint Team will review anonymous complaints. Where they relate to individuals or issues of significant service delivery, these will be logged and investigated in line with the policy. However, if a response is required by the complainant, this will not be possible if we have no method of contacting them.

10.0 The investigation outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know the outcome. If necessary, we will produce a report where we explain how and why we came to our conclusions.

If we find that we made a mistake, we will tell you what happened and why and we will apologise.

If we identify there is a fault in our systems or the way we do things, we will tell you what it is and how we plan to change things to stop it happening again.

11.0 Putting Things Right

If we did not provide you with a service, you should have received, we will agree how this can be resolved. If we did not do something well, we will aim to put it right. If you have been unsettled because of a mistake on our part, we will try to put you back in the position you would have been in if we had done things properly.

If you had to pay for a service yourself, when we should have provided it for you, we will consider an appropriate redress.

12.0 The Ombudsman

If we do not succeed in resolving your complaint, you may complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman is independent of all government bodies and can look into your complaint if you believe that you personally, or the person on whose behalf you are complaining:

- Have been treated unfairly or received a bad service through some failure on the part of Trivallis.
- Have been disadvantaged personally by a service failure or have been treated unfairly.
- The Ombudsman normally expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right.

The Ombudsman normally expects you to bring your concerns to our attention first and to give us a chance to put things right.

You can contact the Ombudsman by:

- Phone: 0300 790 0203
- Email: ask@ombudsman.wales
- The website: www.ombudsman.wales
- Writing to: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, Pencoed CF35 5LJ

There are also other organisations that consider Complaints. For example, the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office deals with Complaints about services in Welsh. We can inform you about such organisations.

13.0 Learning Lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and try to learn from any mistakes we've made.

Managers in our housing and maintenance teams consider a summary of all complaints monthly to ensure timescales are being adhered to, lessons are being learned quickly and follow up actions are being taken.

Our Tenant Services Committee receives quarterly reports for scrutiny and the Board will receive annual reports

Where there is a need for change, we will develop an action plan setting out what we will do, who will do it and when we plan to do it by. We will let you know when changes we've promised have been made

14.0 What if you need help?

Our staff will aim to help you make your concerns known to us. If you need extra assistance, we will try to put you in touch with someone who can help. You may wish to contact, for example Shelter Cymru, your local Councillor, AM or MP, other local independent legal specialists etc., who may be able to assist you

You can look up your local elected Councillor here:

www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Councillors/Councillors.aspx

You can look up your Welsh Government Assembly Member here:

www.senedd.assembly.wales/

You can look up your Member of Parliament here: <http://www.parliament.uk/>

You can look up Shelter Cymru here: www.sheltercymru.org.uk

You can also use this concerns and complaints policy if you are someone under the age of 18. If you need help, you can speak to someone on the Meic Helpline, contact details are:

- Phone: 0808 802 3456
- Website www.meiccymru.org

or contact the Children's Commissioner for Wales. Contact details are:

- Freephone: 0808 801 1000
- Email: post@childcomwales.org.uk
- Website: www.childcom.org.uk
- Writing to: South Wales Office, Oystermouth House, Pheonix Way,
Llansamlet, Swansea, SA7 9FS

15.0 What we expect from you

In times of trouble or distress, some people may act out of character. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a concern or a Complaint. We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because someone is forceful or determined.

We believe that all complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected.

However, we also consider that our staff have the same rights. We therefore expect you to be polite and courteous in your dealings with us.

We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands, or unreasonable persistence. We have a separate policy to manage situations when we find that someone's actions are unacceptable.

16.0 Additional information

16.1 Monitoring

The owner of this policy will ensure that the policy remains relevant, up to date and made available to its intended audience. They will ensure relevant training is provided, and where appropriate, included as part of staff induction plans. They will also monitor customer satisfaction and complaints information to ensure this policy remains effective and appropriate. The periodic review of this policy will take place at least every three years.

16.2 Related legislation and documents

The legislation and documents that support the implementation of the policy are:

- The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) created under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy – Trivallis treats equality of opportunity seriously and this policy is implemented in accordance with its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy. This is made available in accessible formats and applies to all employees, customers, contractors, and community groups to promote and ensure fairness and equality.

Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) are also carried out to ensure fairness and equality.

Data Protection Policy – Any personal or special category data processed under this policy must be processed in accordance with Trivallis' Data Protection Policy and the requirements of the relevant data protection legislation. Guidance on all data protection issues can be obtained from Trivallis' Data Protection Officer.

Where the processing of personal or special category data is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of natural persons, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) must be carried out on the processing operation prior to the processing taking place.

Following completion of the Data Protection Impact Assessment screening questions, it was decided that a Data Protection Impact Assessment was not required for this policy.

16.3 Customer involvement

As a community mutual housing organisation, Trivallis is committed to ensuring customers take an active role in decision making and shaping services. Trivallis has developed this policy by involving its customers during the consultation stage.