


HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT



**A GUIDE TO YMCA EXETER'S
HOUSING COMPLAINTS
PROCEDURE**



Complaints aren't just a way of telling us something went wrong – they're also a way for us to learn, grow, and improve our services.

Whether it's a concern about how you were treated, a delay in support, or something more serious, your voice matters.

When you speak up, we take it seriously. Making a complaint won't affect your housing or the support you receive.

Everyone has a right to be heard and treated fairly.

At YMCA Exeter, we do our best to provide safe, respectful, and supportive services for all our residents.

But we understand that sometimes things go wrong, or you might feel disappointed with the service you've received.

If that happens, you have the right to raise a complaint, and we're here to listen, respond, and put things right where we can.

This guide explains how you can make a complaint, how we'll handle it, and what to expect throughout the process

HOW COMPLAINTS WORK - IN BRIEF

When you make a complaint, we'll acknowledge it and start looking into it. The process has two main stages:

LEVEL 1 – INITIAL INVESTIGATION:

Your complaint will be passed to a senior member of staff, who will investigate it. They'll look into what happened, speak to anyone involved, and try to get a full understanding of the situation. Once this is complete, you'll receive a written response explaining what was found.

LEVEL 2 – REVIEW BY JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES

If you're not happy with the response at Stage 1, you can ask for the complaint to be reviewed by one of our Joint Chief Executives, who will look at everything again with a fresh perspective.

If you've completed both stages of our complaints process and feel your issue hasn't been resolved fairly, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Complaints Stages are explained in detail on the following pages



WHAT COUNTS AS A COMPLAINT?

A complaint is when you tell us that you're unhappy with something we've done, or something we failed to do. It might be about the way a service was delivered, a decision that was made, or how a member of staff behaved.

This is different from things like reporting a repair, asking a question, or making a suggestion. Those are part of our everyday communication with residents. A complaint is when something has gone wrong and you feel it needs to be properly looked into and responded to.

You can make a complaint whether you're a current resident, a former resident, or someone acting on behalf of a resident – like a parent, advocate, or friend. If someone is helping you, we'll need your permission to speak to them on your behalf.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU COMPLAIN?

When you make a complaint, we'll acknowledge it and start looking into it. The process has two main stages:

LEVEL ONE – INITIAL INVESTIGATION:

Your complaint will be passed to a senior member of staff, who will investigate the issue. They'll look into what happened, speak to anyone involved, and try to get a full understanding of the situation. Once the investigation is complete, you'll receive a written response explaining what was found, what actions (if any) will be taken, and how we've reached that decision.

We'll aim to do this in a timely manner and keep you updated if there are any delays. Our goal is to be fair, transparent, and honest with you throughout.

LEVEL TWO – REVIEW BY JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES

If you're not satisfied with the response at Level One, you can ask for the complaint to be reviewed by one of our Joint Chief Executives. They will look at everything again with a fresh perspective, including the original issue and how it was handled during the first level.

After the review, you'll receive a final response, setting out our position. This is the final level of YMCA Exeter's internal complaints process.



OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

While the Joint Chief Executives handle Level Two, the entire complaints process is overseen by the Chair of YMCA Exeter's Board of Trustees.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the process is fair, transparent, and accountable, even though they do not personally investigate or respond to individual complaints.

They may review how complaints are being handled overall, and help ensure improvements are made where needed.

IF YOU FEEL THIS IS STILL NOT RESOLVED...



THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

If you've completed both stages of our complaints process and still feel your issue hasn't been resolved fairly, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service.

This is an independent service set up to help residents in supported housing or accommodation.

You can contact them at any point during the process, but they usually expect you to try resolving the issue with us first.

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

They will look at whether we followed a fair process and whether our response was reasonable.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Every complaint is a chance for us to do better. We record, review and reflect on complaints regularly to understand what's working, what's not, and how we can improve. This helps make our services safer, fairer, and more responsive to your needs.

HELP AND SUPPORT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You don't have to go through this alone. If you feel unsure or overwhelmed, a member of staff, support worker, friend or advocate can help you make your complaint.

If you need help because of a language barrier or communication difficulty, we'll do our best to make sure you're supported in a way that works for you.

RESPECT AND FAIRNESS FOR EVERYONE

We promise to treat all complaints, and the people who make them, with care, dignity, and respect. In return, we ask that everyone involved in the process behaves in a respectful way too. Abuse or discrimination will never be tolerated.

We're committed to resolving complaints fairly and making YMCA Exeter a place where everyone feels heard and valued.



Here for young people
Here for communities
Here for you

YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

FAMILY & YOUTH WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

HOUSING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

SUPPORT & ADVICE