Customer Complaints Policy

Complaints procedure for Riverview Estate Management Limited

1. Purpose

This policy explains how leaseholders, freeholders, residents, tenants, landlords, resident management companies, right to manage companies, directors and other customers can raise a complaint with us about our residential property management services. We aim to provide a high standard of service, but we recognise that things can sometimes go wrong. When they do, we will listen, investigate, respond fairly and use feedback to improve our management of the buildings and estates for which we are responsible.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints about our residential property management services, including communication, service charge administration, maintenance and repairs, contractor management, estate services, insurance administration, section 20 consultation administration, leaseholder and resident enquiries, complaints about staff conduct, delays, errors or any failure to meet an agreed or reasonable standard of service.

3. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the level of service provided by Riverview Estate Management Limited, where a customer expects a response or resolution. The scope of our service is laid out in the RICS Code of Conduct 4th edition. A copy of the code may be found at https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/real-estate-standards/service-charge-residential-management-code

4. How to Make a Complaint

Customers should make complaints in writing by email to complaints@riverviewem.co.uk or letter to 27 Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX, so that we have a clear record of the issue.

A complaint should include the customer's name, contact details, property address, building or estate name, account or reference number where relevant, a clear summary of what has gone wrong, relevant dates, copies of supporting documents or photographs and the outcome sought. If a customer has difficulty making a written complaint, we will make reasonable adjustments and help them record the complaint.

5. Our Complaint Handling Principles

- We will treat customers fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.
- We will make the process clear, accessible and easy to use.
- We will acknowledge complaints promptly and keep customers informed.
- We will investigate complaints thoroughly and impartially.
- We will explain our decisions clearly and provide appropriate remedies where we have made a mistake.
- We will record complaints and use them to identify trends, root causes and service improvements.

6. Timescales

We will acknowledge a complaint within 3 working days of receipt.

We aim to provide a full written response as soon as reasonably possible and no later than 15 working days from receiving the complaint.

If we cannot provide a final response within that period; we will explain the reason for the delay and tell the customer when they can expect a response.

Where the complaint has not been resolved within 8 weeks, or where we have issued our final viewpoint letter and the customer remains dissatisfied, the customer may refer the complaint to The Property Ombudsman should the complaint fall within its remit.

7. Investigation and Response

We will investigate the complaint by reviewing the information provided, checking relevant property records, service charge or maintenance records where applicable, correspondence, contractor updates, site inspection notes and any other relevant evidence.

We may speak to colleagues, contractors, directors, landlords or other parties involved in the management of the property where this is necessary and appropriate. Our written response will explain what we investigated, our findings, whether the complaint is upheld in full or in part, any action we will take, any remedy offered and the customer's right to escalate if they remain dissatisfied.

8. Remedies

Where we identify that something has gone wrong, we will aim to put matters right as far as reasonably possible. This may include an apology, correction of an error, improved

communication, clarification of accounts or charges, arranging or chasing a contractor, reviewing a process, staff training, a goodwill gesture, reimbursement of a direct loss where appropriate or another proportionate remedy.

We cannot use this complaints process to make determinations that are reserved for a court, tribunal, insurer, landlord, freeholder or other decision-making body.

9. Escalation

If the customer is unhappy with our response, they may ask for the complaint to be reviewed by a senior manager or director who has not been directly involved in the original response where reasonably possible.

The escalation request should explain why the customer remains dissatisfied and include any new information.

We will acknowledge the escalation within 5 working days and aim to issue a final viewpoint letter as soon as reasonably possible and no later than 8 weeks from the date we first received the complaint.

10. The Property Ombudsman

We are committed to resolving complaints through our internal complaint's procedure. If the customer remains dissatisfied after receiving our final viewpoint letter, or if 8 weeks have passed since we received the complaint and we have not issued a final response, the customer may be able to refer the matter to The Property Ombudsman. The Property Ombudsman provides an independent redress service for eligible complaints about property businesses, including certain complaints about residential property management services. Customers should refer their complaint to The Property Ombudsman within the applicable time limits and should include our final response, correspondence and supporting evidence.

If after the complaint process has been exhausted and the customer remains dissatisfied, they may refer the complaint to the Property Ombudsman without charge to:

The Property Ombudsman (TPOS)
Milford House
43-45 Millford STreet
Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP1 2BP
Tel: 01722 333 306

Fax: 01722 332 296
Email: admin@tpos.co.uk
Website: www.tpos.co.uk

Please note that you will need to submit your complaint to the TPO within 12 months of receiving our final viewpoint letter, including all relevant evidence to support your case.

Additionally, if you reside in a high-rise building, as defined by the BSA 2022, and your complaint is related to a structural issue or risk from the spread of fire you may refer the matter without charge to:

The Building Safety Regulator
Tel: 0300 790 6787
Website: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complain-about-a-building-safety-risk-in-a-high-rise-building

11. Confidentiality and Data Protection

We will handle complaint information confidentially and in accordance with applicable data protection requirements. Information will only be shared with people who need it to investigate, respond to or resolve the complaint, such as relevant staff, contractors, clients, directors, landlords, insurers, professional advisers or redress bodies, unless disclosure is required by law or regulation.

12. Records and Continuous Improvement

We will keep appropriate records of complaints, outcomes, final viewpoint letters and actions taken. Complaint data will be reviewed periodically to identify recurring issues, root causes, building-specific trends, contractor performance concerns, communication improvements, training needs and opportunities to improve our property management service.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner if there are significant changes to our business, services, legal obligations, regulatory requirements or complaint trends.