

Complaints Policy

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Executive Lead:	Executive Director of Communities
Approved By:	Housing & Communities Committee
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**Please note this document is available in Welsh and other formats upon request.
Please contact the communications and media team.**

1.0 Policy Statement

At Trivallis, we value your feedback, including complaints, as an important way to help us improve the services we provide to our communities. We aim to learn from every concern raised and take action to make things better where we can.

While our complaints policy sets out clear guidance on how we will manage and respond to complaints, our primary focus is always on putting things right for our tenants as quickly and effectively as possible. We are committed to resolving issues promptly and within the published timescales. However, we also recognise that some tenants, particularly those who are vulnerable, may require a swifter response. In such cases, we will do our utmost to expedite the resolution process to ensure their needs are met in a timely and appropriate manner.

Our Complaints Policy follows the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) standards and reflects our commitment to high levels of accountability, fairness, and customer care.

When you raise a concern or make a complaint, we will usually respond as set out in this policy. Sometimes, you may have a statutory right of appeal instead of a formal complaint.

For example, if you disagree with a decision about a mutual exchange or a home improvement request, we will explain the appeal process and guide you on how to progress it.

Some concerns may not fall within this policy, such as neighbour disputes. If this happens, we will advise you on the best way to raise your concern so it can be addressed appropriately.

This policy does not cover Freedom of Information or data access requests. For these, please contact our Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@trivallis.co.uk.

Our Complaint Co-ordinators are available to help you understand whether your concern is a complaint and to guide you through the process. We want to make it as simple as possible for you to be heard.

2.0 Introduction

Trivallis is committed to listening to any concerns or complaints you may have about our services. Our goal is to make things clear, resolve issues wherever possible, and learn from every situation to improve the way we work.

If we have made a mistake, we will put it right. If a service you are entitled to has not been delivered, we will take steps to ensure you receive it. When things go wrong, we will apologise and, where possible, take action to resolve the issue for you.

We also aim to use the information we gain from complaints to improve our services and prevent similar problems from happening in the future. Your feedback helps us provide better support for everyone in our communities.

2.1 Scope

Our complaints process is designed to be simple and supportive. We aim to empower you to raise your concerns and to make it as easy as possible for our staff to respond in a professional and constructive way.

We have two stages for handling complaints:

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution

This is the first step and gives us the chance to resolve your concern quickly. We aim to address the issue at the time it arises or shortly afterwards. This may include providing an explanation or taking other action to put things right.

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

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal stage, you can ask for a formal investigation. A senior member of staff will investigate your complaint carefully, following the principle of “investigate once, investigate well.”

All formal complaints are logged in our complaints system. If your complaint is upheld, in full or in part, our response will include an apology and details of any action we will take to resolve the issue.

We aim to respond to formal complaints within 20 working days. In more complex cases, we will keep you updated if it takes longer.

2.2 Key definitions

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

Trivallis will escalate and review multiple tenant service requests to prevent service failure, ensuring unresolved issues are addressed promptly to avoid harm or distress to tenants.

A complaint is not:

- A first request for service such as reporting a repair or Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 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.

2.3 Roles and responsibilities

Who	How
Board/Committee	The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that Trivallis has an effective, fair and transparent approach to complaint handling. While the Board does not become involved in the investigation or resolution of individual complaints, it provides strategic oversight and assurance that complaints are used to drive service improvement and accountability.
Director of Repairs and Customer Experience	Has overall responsibility for complaint handling and is responsible for ensuring complaint information is reported through to the appropriate committee & Board.
Head of Customer Experience	Is the complaints lead for Trivallis: Updating Policy & Procedure. Supporting organisational lessons learned Maintains a record of all action plans and changes in practice resulting from complaints and obtaining progress reports on actions at regular intervals. Providing a progress report on action plans to the Tenant Action Panel Provides information to the Ombudsman.
Customer Services Manager	Responsible for the operational management of complaints and maintains an up-to-date database for complaints. Provides monthly reports on complaints data and service improvements to Senior Managers. Reviews quality of complaint responses and removes any jargon.
Complaint Co-ordinators	Co-ordinate any complaints and where appropriate, co-ordinate joint complaints providing a single

	integrated complaint response. In such cases liaise with other investigating officers and agree who will take the lead in coordinating investigations and sending out the final response. 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.
Investigating Officers	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. Are responsible for writing draft complaint responses and addressing all the concerns raised. Responsible for attending meetings with the complainant, when requested and for any action plans to be drawn up because of the complaint. To investigate the subject of the complaint and provide a fair, accurate, comprehensive report of their investigation within the agreed timescale
Tenant Action Panel	Monitor complaints performance and action plans Share lessons learnt on website
Complaints Working Group	Tenants who work alongside the Head of Service to monitor trends of complaints received and recommend changes to service delivery. Review case studies for service improvement and recommends changes required to Tenant Action Panel
Departmental Heads of Service	Responsible for implementation of any action plan arising from a complaint relating to their area of responsibility. Provides the Head of Customer Services with progress reports on action plan completions. Reviews complaint information to improve performance and increase customer satisfaction
Trivallis staff	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

3.0 How to express concern or complain

You can express your concern or make a complaint in any of the following ways:

- Contact our Customer Services Team on 03000 030 888.
- Speak with any member of staff and tell them that you would like your concern to be handled formally.
- Email us at Customerservices@trivallis.co.uk.
- Use the tenant portal via our website at www.trivallis.co.uk.
- Write to us at:
Complaints and Concerns
Trivallis
Ty Pennant, Mill Street
Pontypridd, CF37 2SW

The policy and associated forms can be provided in other languages if required.

Reasonable adjustments will be made for people wishing to complain who are living with disabilities or experiencing multiple disadvantages. This may include making the policy and associated forms available in large print, audio format, braille, translated versions, or providing one-to-one support to help someone complete a complaint.

4.0 Dealing with your concern

All complaints are logged, and we will acknowledge your complaint on the same working day it is received.

We will make personal contact with you within two working days. When we acknowledge your complaint, we will provide details of our complaints process and give you a reference number.

We will ask how you would like us to communicate with you and whether you need any additional support. This may include receiving information in large print, audio format, or another language.

We will deal with your concern in an open, fair, and honest way.

Normally, we can only look at concerns that are raised within six months of the issue happening. This helps us investigate matters while information is still available and events are fresh in people's minds.

In exceptional circumstances, we may consider concerns raised later than six months. In these cases, we will ask you to explain why the issue could not be raised sooner and will need enough information to investigate it properly. We will not usually consider concerns about matters that took place more than three years ago.

If you are raising a concern on behalf of someone else, we will need their consent

confirming that you are acting on their behalf.

4.1 Safeguarding

Any concerns relating to a vulnerable adult, a child, or anyone who may be at risk will be acted upon promptly and managed in line with our Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy, including reporting such concerns to our Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

Where vulnerabilities or additional support needs are identified, Trivallis will apply its Team Around the Tenant approach to ensure the tenant is supported in a coordinated and person-centred way, and that any safeguarding or wider support needs are addressed.

4.2 Unreasonable and Unacceptable Behaviour

There may be times when a complainant behaves in a way that is considered unreasonable or unacceptable. This could include aggressive or abusive behaviour, make excessive or unreasonable demands, or persistently pursuing a complaint in a way that significantly impacts staff or service delivery.

In such cases, Trivallis will follow its Unacceptable Behaviour Procedure. The Customer Services Manager will support the Investigating Manager in managing correspondence and communication, ensuring a consistent and professional approach.

We recognise that some tenants may be experiencing multiple disadvantages, and we will always look to offer full support where it is required, even when managing unacceptable behaviour.

Where appropriate, the Investigating Manager may inform the complainant that no further action can be taken on their current complaint, while making clear that new or substantive issues will still be considered.

All decisions regarding unacceptable behaviour will be communicated clearly and respectfully, explaining the reasons and confirming what is considered acceptable in future interactions. This ensures staff can continue to provide services effectively while maintaining the rights of the complainant.

Where a complainant persistently raises issues, including through repetitive or automated correspondence (for example using AI tools such as ChatGPT or similar), we will consider this as part of our assessment of unreasonable persistence. We will continue to respond fairly and fully to concerns but may manage further

correspondence if it prevents resolution or takes an unreasonable amount of staff time. The Customer Service Manager and Investigating Manager will work together to apply the Unacceptable Behaviour Procedure in these cases.

5.0 How the Complaint will be Investigated

When you make a complaint, we will let you know the name of the staff member who has been assigned to investigate it.

- If your concern is straightforward, a staff member from the relevant service area will investigate and respond.
- If your concern is more serious or involves multiple teams, we may involve staff from other areas of Trivallis or, in certain cases, appoint an independent investigator.

We will clearly set out our understanding of your complaint and ask you to confirm that we have captured all your concerns. We will also ask what outcome you are hoping to achieve.

The investigator may need to access files or records relevant to your complaint. If you do not want this to happen, please let us know.

Where a swift solution is possible, we may discuss how to resolve the issue promptly without undertaking a full investigation.

For complaints that are more complex, we will:

- Send a holding letter explaining the reason for any delay
- Tell you how long we expect the investigation to take
- Provide regular updates on progress, including if any developments change the expected timeframe

The investigator will aim to establish the facts. The scope of the investigation will depend on the seriousness and complexity of the issues raised. In some complex cases, we may draw up an investigation plan.

Where appropriate, we may meet with you to discuss your concerns. Occasionally, we may suggest mediation or another method to help resolve disputes.

We will consider all relevant evidence, including information you have provided, case files, notes of conversations, letters, and emails. We may also speak to staff or others involved, and review our policies, legal guidance, and good practice standards.

5.1 Resolving Complaints Crossing More Than One Team.

Sometimes a complaint may involve more than one team within Trivallis. In these cases, we will treat it as a single complaint to ensure it is dealt with consistently and efficiently.

Our Complaints Team will coordinate the investigation to make sure all aspects of the complaint are addressed in one response.

Where a third party provides services on our behalf, we will ensure the complaint is investigated according to our own complaints policy and service standards.

If the complaint relates to an external organisation, such as a local authority or another company, we will refer the matter to the relevant organisation and let you know who to contact.

5.2 Receiving Anonymous Complaints

Our Complaints Team will review all anonymous complaints. If the complaint relates to an individual, involves a significant service issue, or raises a safeguarding concern, it will be logged and investigated in line with this policy.

However, if a response is required, we will only be able to respond if we have a way to contact the complainant.

6.0 The Investigation outcome

If we formally investigate your complaint, we will let you know the outcome. Where appropriate, we may provide a report explaining how and why we reached our conclusions.

If we find that we made a mistake, we will explain what happened, why it occurred, and apologise.

If we identify a fault in our systems or the way we deliver services, we will explain what the issue is and what steps we plan to take to prevent it happening again.

7.0 Putting Things Right

If we did not provide a service that you were entitled to, we will agree with you how this can be resolved.

If we did not carry out a service properly, we will aim to put it right. If you have been unsettled or inconvenienced because of a mistake on our part, we will try to

put you back in the position you would have been in if things had been done correctly.

If you had to pay for a service yourself that we should have provided, we will consider providing appropriate redress.

8.0 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.

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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.

9.0 Learning lessons

We take your concerns and complaints seriously and use them to improve our services.

Managers across our varied teams review a summary of all complaints each month to ensure we meet timescales, learn lessons quickly, and take any necessary follow-up actions.

Our Homes and Communities Committee receives data quarterly to scrutinise performance, and receives an annual report.

Where changes are needed, we will develop an action plan that clearly sets out what will be done, who is responsible, and when it will be completed. We will let you know when the changes we have promised have been made.

10.0 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

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 these 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

11.0 What we expect from you

We understand that at times, people may be facing difficult situations or challenges that affect how they raise a concern or complaint.

All complainants have the right to be heard, understood, and respected. At the same time, our staff have the same right to be treated politely and courteously.

We will not tolerate aggressive or abusive behaviour, unreasonable demands, or persistent contact that goes beyond what is reasonable. Situations like these will be managed under our Unacceptable Behaviour policy.

Where vulnerabilities or support needs are identified, we will apply our Team Around the Tenant (TATT) approach. This ensures that, even in challenging situations, tenants receive the support they need while we address concerns appropriately.

We will always aim to support tenants, including those experiencing multiple disadvantages, but we ask for cooperation and respect in return.

12.0 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.

12.1 Equal Opportunities

This policy will be implemented in line with the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

12.2 Data Protection

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.

12.3 Data Governance Statement

Trivallis is subject to GDPR legislation and as such this policy and any supporting procedures need to ensure that the way we manage personal data fulfils the GDPR requirements relating to:

- Lawfulness, fairness, and transparency (our need to hold this data).
- Purpose limitation (personal data must be held for specific and legitimate purposes).
- Data minimisation (data must be limited to what is necessary; do we need it?).
- Accuracy (it needs to be up to date and accurate).
- Storage limitation (how long we are allowed to keep it).
- Integrity and confidentiality (how we securely hold it).
- Accountability (how we take responsibility for it).

Where the policy and any supporting procedures make use of data not covered by data protection legislation - for example, where the data is not personal data, or where it is unstructured, such as in emails, text messages, social media posts, or multimedia files like audio or video - it is still important to ensure that you save the files or documents to secure network drives, or shared network areas if the data is not confidential, and then assign sensitivity and retention markers.

You should always store data in a main system, and avoid creating additional copies of the data in multiple locations, for the following reasons:

- Data integrity reduces the risk of inconsistencies or discrepancies.
- Security makes it easier to manage security protocols.
- Data governance and compliance makes it easier to ensure and demonstrate compliance with regulations such as the data protection laws and enables us to organise and track data usage and enforce policies.
- Efficient data management simplifies data management tasks such as backup, disaster recovery and data migration.
- Cost effectiveness reduces the costs associated with maintaining multiple copies of data across various locations.
- Collaboration and accessibility help ensure that employees can easily access and share information, fostering productivity and teamwork.

Specific guidance on data governance can be obtained from Trivallis' Transformation Team.

13.0 Review

The original policy was developed with tenants ensuring their views were reflected while maintaining the Ombudsman standards.

This policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis by the Head of Customer Experience earlier in the event of relevant legislative changes. Where changes impact tenants or other bodies we will consult with them as part of the change process.

The next date for scheduled review is Jan 2027.

Printed copies of this document are not controlled.

Complaints Process

Receive Complaint

- |— Via letter
- |— Via email
- └— Via telephone/in person

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Complaint is logged

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Complaints Team assigns to investigating officer

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Investigation Begins

- |— Investigating officer makes personal contact (within 2 working days)
- |— Speak with complainant
- |— Agree actions
- |— Record contact

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|— Evidence Gathering

- | |— Staff
- | |— Contractors
- | |— Witnesses
- | |— Records/files

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|— Complex Case?

- | |— YES → Extend timescale + send holding letter
- | |— NO → Continue investigation



Draft Response Prepared

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- |— Quality check
- |— Checklist completed



Send Full Written Response (within 10 working days)

If 10-day timescale not met, complaint flips to a stage 2 formal

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Are All Actions/Promises Completed?

- |— NO → Continue follow-up
- |— YES → Proceed to closure

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Close Complaint

- |— Record closure reason

|— Confirm remedial works completed
|— Log compensation (if applicable)
|

Appeal Received?

|— NO → END
|— YES → Begin Appeals Process
|



Record Appeal as a Stage 2 Formal Complaint