

POLICY NUMBER: 7.6
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AUTHORISED BY: BAH Board

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a process for renters, applicants and other stakeholders to register their dissatisfaction with any of the services provided by Baptcare Affordable Housing (BAH).

In this policy:

- A complaint is when someone tells BAH that they are dissatisfied with our services, standards, practices or policies;
- An appeal is where a person seeks to have a decision made by BAH reviewed.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies only to renters, applicants and other stakeholders of BAH.

It does not apply to the following:

- Disputes or grievances between employees of BAH
- Complaints by a tenant about someone else outside the organisation
- Disputes that are covered by other legislation e.g. a dispute about tenant or landlord responsibilities that come under the jurisdiction of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

3. PRINCIPLES

BAH is committed to involving and empowering renters in the provision of its services. BAH places a high value on the rights of renters to lodge complaints and appeal any decision made. BAH welcomes feedback and is committed to using it to respond to the needs of renters in order to continuously improve our service delivery.

To achieve this, BAH will make it easy for renters and applicants to complain through:

- The promotion of our Complaints and Appeals process in the Renting Information Pack given to every renter upon commencement of their tenancy
- The promotion of a specific page on the website where complaints and feedback can be lodged

- The promotion of the number of different ways in which complaints can be made, including email, by phone, in person and in writing.

BAH will:

- Keep all records of complaints made and actions taken in a Complaints Register, according to its regulatory requirements under the Housing Act 1983
- Ensure that all matters concerning the complaints and appeals process remain confidential and that rights to privacy are respected. Any information provided by renters or applicants will remain confidential
- Take all complaints seriously and ensure they are addressed promptly and fairly
- Not take any adverse action against renters simply because they have made a complaint
- Review complaints regularly and identify ways in which the delivery of services can be improved
- Be open and transparent in the investigation of complaints
- Keep complainants informed about the steps being taken to look into the complaint
- Inform complainants of their right to an advocate or support person to assist them in the complaints process.

4. MAKING A COMPLAINT

A complaint can be made in a number of different ways. Complainants can:

- Make a complaint in person, by email, over the phone, by letter or on an official BAH complaint form
- Talk directly to the person in BAH they think is responsible for sorting out the problem
- Talk the problem over with someone who is not directly involved
- Talk to someone outside BAH who can help them with the complaint
- Ask for an interpreter to assist them
- Take your complaint to a higher authority if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint.

5. HOW BAH RESPONDS

When notified of a complaint BAH will provide a written response within a timeframe of no later than one working week. The response will include:

- An acknowledgement of the complaint
- An indication of the timeframe in which the complaint will be addressed
- The process undertaken internally to address the issue
- An acknowledgement of your right to an advocate or support person to assist resolution of the complaint.

6. FURTHER STEPS

If BAH does not resolve the complaint within 30 days, the complaint can be referred to the Housing Registrar for investigation.

Phone: (03) 9651 1402

Email: housingregistrarcomplaints@dtf.vic.gov.au

Mail: Housing Registrar, Level 5, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne VIC 3001

If the complaint concerns an appeal about eligibility for the Victorian Housing Register then the person wishing to make a complaint shall be referred to the Housing Appeals Office in the Department of Health and Human Services. They will have to fill out an Appeal Application Form, which is available at:

- Local housing offices
- The Housing Appeals Office: 9096 7426 or free call 1800 807 702
- Email: housingappeals@dhhs.vic.gov.au
- Online at www.housing.vic.gov.au/forms-guides>

If they wish to appeal a decision made by BAH, they can use the internal appeals process to a more senior person to request a review of the outcome, the decisions made, or the actions taken. All appeals will be dealt with in a respectful manner, the right to privacy will be upheld and all details will remain confidential.

If they wish to have a decision reviewed regarding access to your personal information, or correction of that personal information you can do so by contacting the BAH Privacy Officer.

Phone: (03) 9831 7222

Email: privacy@baptcare.org.au

Mail: Privacy Officer, PO Box 230, Hawthorn, VIC 3122

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS, STANDARDS AND LEGISLATION

BAH Brochure: How to make a complaint
Residential Tenancies Act 1997
Housing Act 1983
Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standards
BAH Privacy and Information Sharing Policy

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if the legal, regulatory and contractual environment requires.

9. TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY

This policy will be available on the BAH website: www.baptcare.org.au/services/housing/affordable-housing