

RURAL URBAN SYNTHESIS SOCIETY

Complaints and Feedback Policy

Document title	Complaints and Feedback Policy
Version	2.0
Status	Approved
Effective date	22.04.26
Next review date	May 2029

1. Policy Statement and Definitions

The Rural Urban Synthesis Society Ltd (RUSS) aims to offer a high quality service to all residents, members and stakeholders. As a member-led organisation, committed to transparency, we value all feedback to help us monitor and improve our performance. This can include:

A service request: A request requiring action to put something right. Users will receive clear actions and timeframes.

Feedback: Comments or suggestions that do not require immediate action but inform organisational learning and board reviews.

A complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by RUSS, its staff, or those acting on its behalf. Complaints can be made verbally, via email, letter, or the resident forum. The word 'complaint' does not need to be used for it to be treated as one.

2. Compliance and Accessibility

This policy adheres to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code (April 2024). RUSS provides reasonable adjustments for neurological, mental, or physical needs, including the right to be represented by another person.

3. Our Complaint Handling Process

The Chair of the Board serves as the Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). Initial complaints are managed by the staff or board member who first receives them, with MRC oversight.

Exclusions: RUSS may decline complaints regarding:

- First-time routine service requests or information queries
- Matters already resolved through a final decision
- Issues subject to active legal proceedings or insurance claims (e.g., personal injury)
- Incidents occurring over 12 months ago at the board's discretion

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Stage 1: Investigation

- **Acknowledgement:** Within **5 working days**, including a summary of the complaint and the designated investigator.
- **Response:** A full response is provided within **10 working days**. If further work is needed, an agreed schedule will be provided.
- **Escalation:** If unsatisfied, the individual has **15 days** to request a Stage 2 review.

Stage 2: Internal Review

- **Acknowledgement:** Within **5 working days**. The MRC or a designated trustee will handle the review.
- **Response:** A final decision is communicated within **20 working days**. The individual is given an opportunity to comment before the decision is finalised.

Taking a complaint further

If the individual is not satisfied with the outcome from Stage 2 they are given details of how to take up the matter with either a 'designated person' such as their local MP or councillor or, for residents, if RUSS's application for Registered Provider status is approved, The Housing Ombudsman.

4. Outcomes and Performance

RUSS aims to put things right through apologies, explanations, changing practice or financial remedies. Complaints are monitored and reported to the board of trustees on a quarterly basis. If this reporting highlights a specific area of concern, trustees can initiate a policy or service review. This policy will be published on the RUSS website.

5. Contact Information

RUSS: info@russ.org | 12 Church Grove, London SE13 7UU

Housing Ombudsman: 0300 111 3000 | info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk | www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk | online complaints form <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/bring-your-complaint-to-the-housing-ombudsman/>