



Policy Appeals

Organisational

Purpose

Unity Housing Company Ltd (Unity) is committed to the principles of natural justice and ensuring that due process is followed. We respect the right for users of our service (customers) to ask for a review of decisions we have made. This policy details the process for these reviews.

Scope

This policy covers appeals lodged by users of any Unity service within the Social Housing program.

It does not cover the complaints process which is detailed in Unity's Complaints Procedure.

Principles

- Customers have the right to appeal decisions and not be disadvantaged by doing so.
- Persons making an appeal can involve an advocate or support person at any point in the appeal process.
- Unity will adopt a transparent and objective approach to receiving, investigating and responding to appeals.
- Unity welcomes appeals and will use the outcomes and learnings from appeals in its continuous improvement approach to service delivery.
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times

Definitions

Appeal – when a user of our service asks for a decision to be reviewed.

Appellant – person lodging the appeal

Complaint – when a user of our service tells us they are dissatisfied with our service, standards, practices or policies

Customer – person using or who has used a Unity service, such as an applicant, tenant or ex-tenant.

Policy

An appeal may be lodged when a customer believes that a decision made by Unity:

- Was inconsistent with Unity policies and procedures
- Did not consider all of the relevant information before making the decision
- Was not fair, taking into account any particular circumstances

Unity encourages customers to talk to the person who made the decision in question, and/or another Unity staff member, in the first instance. If still uncomfortable or unhappy with the decision, the customer can seek an internal review of the decision by lodging an Appeals form with Unity.

Appeals must be lodged within 30 days of being informed of the decision in question.

In exceptional circumstances, and where the decision in question resulted in an ongoing, binding agreement without pre-determined review points, an appeal may be lodged after the 30 day period.



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How to lodge an appeal

- Complete an Appeal form which can be downloaded from the Unity website, collected from any Unity office or a request made for one to be sent by mail or email
- Send the completed form to: Complaints and Appeals Officer, Unity Housing, 81 Osmond Terrace Norwood SA 5067
- Email the completed form to the Complaints and Appeals Officer at feedback@unityhousing.org.au

Unity review process

Appeals will be formally acknowledged in writing within two (2) working days of receipt by the Complaints and Appeals Officer who will also record details of the appeal on the Appeals Register.

The Complaints and Appeals Officer will refer the matter to the relevant Executive Manager who will appoint an internal investigator immediately upon notification of the appeal.

The Investigator will conduct the investigation and review of the decision within 15 working days from the appeal lodgement date and will update the Appeals Register with details of the outcome. The Investigator will ensure the appellant is notified in writing of the outcome within five (5) working days of completing the investigation.

The entire Unity appeals process should be completed within 20 working days of the appeal being lodged.

Any hard copy records generated as a result of the investigation will be stored centrally with the Executive Manager responsible for appeals.

External Review

If unhappy with the outcome of the Unity appeal, customers have the right to access an independent review process regarding:

- Assessment of eligibility or financial circumstances
- Allocation of housing
- Condition of their property
- Calculation of rent and charges
- Any other decision affecting their occupation or use of the property

An application to appeal can be lodged with the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) within 30 days of receiving notification of the Unity appeal outcome. An extension of this time can be requested when making this application.

Appeals to SACAT are lodged using their online application or by contacting them directly for assistance:

- Phone: 1800 723 767
- Email: sacat@sacat.sa.gov.au
- Postal address: GPO Box 2361 Adelaide SA 5001

Implementation

The Appeals Policy and associated documentation are available to staff through the Document Library on the intranet.



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Responsibilities

The Complaints and Appeals Officer is responsible for:

- Receiving and acknowledging appeals lodged, in writing within two (2) working days;
- Recording and updating details of the appeal on the Appeals Register;
- Referring the appeals to the relevant Executive Manager

Executive Managers are responsible for:

- Appointing an internal investigator when notified of an appeal request.

The Investigator is responsible for:

- Investigating and reviewing the decision within 15 working days of the appeal lodgement date;
- Notifying the appellant of the outcome of the review with 20 working days of the appeal lodgement date; and
- Updating the Appeals Register with details of the outcome of the investigation.

Associated Documentation

Appeal Form

Appeals Information Guide

Community Housing Providers (National Law) (SA) Act 2013

Endorsements

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Blayden'.

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Date: 05/01/2016

Next Review Date:

1 January 2019