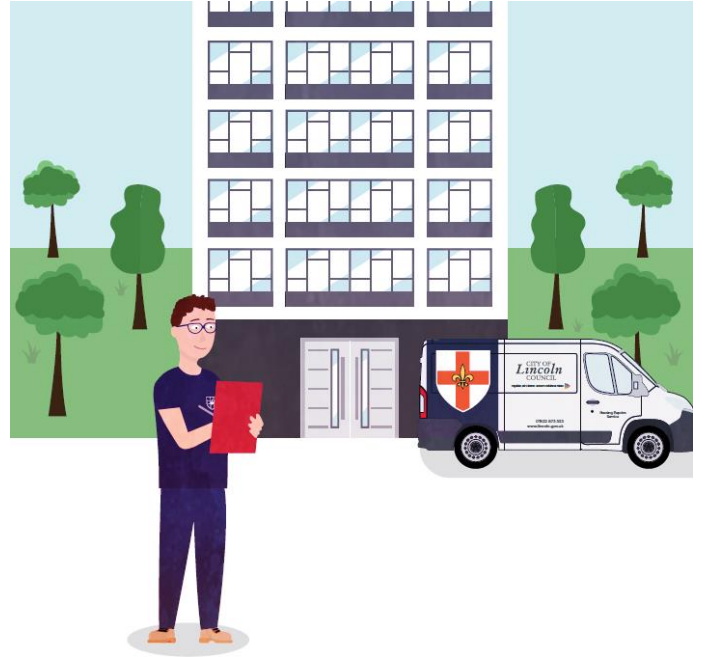




Directorate of Housing and
Investment

Building and Fire Safety Complaints Procedure for High-Rise Residential Building



Produced by.
Safety Assurance Team
Version. July 2025
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Version Control

Revision Date	Author	Previous Version	Description of Revision
11/07/2025	Martin Kerrigan	New	New procedure in line with Building Safety Act.

Introduction

The Building Safety Act 2022 requires the Principle Accountable Person (PAP) such as the City of Lincoln Council as a landlord to set up and operate a process for residents and other users of high-rise residential buildings to be able to raise any concerns related to building safety risks including structure and fire safety risks or their landlords performance.

All high-rise residential buildings are now required to have an 'accountable person' and a 'principle accountable person' in place. They must manage the fire and structural safety risks of high-rise residential buildings and enable residents to make their concerns about safety heard.

High-rise residential building (HRB): has at least 7 floors or is at least 18 metres high and include at least two residential units.

Principle Accountable Person (PAP): there can only be one PAP for each building which is usually the owner of the building, or the organisation named as responsible for the maintenance of the common parts. APs can also be a PAP.

Accountable Person (AP): can be an organisation or a person who owns or has a legal obligation to repair the common parts of a building, including the structure, exterior and staircases. Buildings can have more than one AP and each building should have a Resident Engagement Strategy.

AP are responsible for assessing and managing the risks in a building from structural failure or the spread of fire. AP must be registered with the Building Safety Regulator and are required to carry out regular checks of the building.

For the City of Lincoln Council owned High-Rise Residential Buildings (Jarvis House, Shuttleworth House and Trent View) the PAP and AP is the City of Lincoln Council with the position of Director of Housing and Investment as PAP in the Tree of Responsibility (Health, Safety and welfare Policy). Other persons having accountability include Assistant Director Housing Assets, Fire Safety Assurance Manager, Investment Manager, Maintenance Manager, Assistant Director Housing Management, Tenancy Services Manager, Area Housing Manager and Static/ Floating Caretaker to name a few.

The City of Lincoln Council has an existing 'Corporate Customer Complaints Policy', this complaints procedure is set out to support the policy and in terms of relevant building and fire safety complaints related to high rise buildings.

Purpose of a Building Safety Complaint Procedure:

The purpose of a building safety complaints procedure is to:

- ▶ Make it easy for residents to raise concerns with those responsible for building safety risks.
- ▶ Clarify what a 'relevant complaint' is, so that residents know when and how to raise issues.
- ▶ Ensure impartial and fair treatment for all the issues raised.

What is a relevant complaint?

A relevant complaint include:

- ▶ Structural failure that could lead to part or all of the building collapsing, or parts of the building falling off.
- ▶ Flammable cladding on the outside of a high-rise building.
- ▶ Any risk in the building that could lead to a fire spreading, such as fire doors not working properly
- ▶ Performance of an accountable person, including

- ▶ Their communication to residents
- ▶ Their responses to raised concerns
- ▶ How they manage building safety risks

If a complaint is received that relates to several issues, we will deal with the building safety issue separately. Different elements of a complaint may be the responsibility of different teams and although co-ordinated by our Corporate Complaints Officers, will be investigated by the most appropriate part of the organisation.

A Customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' for us to treat it as one. Whenever a customer expresses dissatisfaction, we will give them the choice to make a complaint.

Where a third party or representative submits a complaint on behalf of a customer, it will be handled in line with this complaints policy.

There is a distinct difference between a service request and a complaint. A service request is a contact from a customer that brings a matter to the council's attention for the first time, and requests a service offered by the council, for example, reporting a missed bin or telling us about noise nuisance.

Service requests should be made on our contact us page or by calling our Customer Service team. If a service request is raised via the complaints system, it will be passed to the correct service to deal with as any other enquiry to that service would be.

A customer may make a complaint during an ongoing service request. Receipt of a complaint will not stop our efforts to address the service request.

We will not treat an expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey as a complaint. However, where we ask for wider feedback about services, we will also provide details of how residents can complain.

How can a relevant complaint be made?

A relevant complaint can be made in the same way as any other complaint. This includes, online, by telephone or email, in person and to any member of staff. We would encourage complaints to include photo or video evidence to help us understand the issue.

If we cannot accept a complaint as a 'relevant complaint' we will explain why this is, and how we will deal with your concerns instead.

Online: www.lincoln.gov.uk/

Call: 01522 873333

Email: Customer.Services@lincoln.gov.uk

Post: Customer Services
City of Lincoln Council
City Hall
Beaumont Fee
Lincoln
LN1 1DD

In Person: City of Lincoln Council Employee

How long will it take to deal with a relevant complaint?

As per the 'Corporate Customer Complaints Policy, complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the following agreed timescales:

- ▶ We will acknowledge complaints within 5 working days.
- ▶ For level 1 complaints we will respond within 10 working days of the date of acknowledgement.
- ▶ For level 2 complaints, where the customer remains dissatisfied and has asked for a review of the level 1 response, we will respond within 20 working days of the acknowledgement of the escalation request

When investigating a complaint, we will keep the customer informed if there are any issues delaying our progress. We will always explain if there is any delay in our response causing it to fall outside of our target times.

What happens when a relevant complaint is made?

Each Directorate has a Complaints Officer who reports to their Departmental Management Team and provides information on complaints performance to the Customer Service Manager. For relevant building safety complaints for the high rise buildings these will also be reported to the Fire Safety Assurance Manager.

We refer all complaints, no matter how we receive them, to the Directorate Complaints Officer. This is to ensure that we record and respond to every complaint and report on our overall performance. The Directorate Complaints Officer will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and assign it to an appropriate person to investigate it. At this point, the target response time begins.

We will assess the 'risk' raised in a complaint and prioritise our actions based on the level of risk identified. If you have any concerns with how we are dealing with your complaint you can contact the Building Safety Regulator.

The Directorate Complaints Officers are responsible for allocating complaints to the most suitable person to undertake the investigation and conclusion of each complaint. These officers have senior management support to hold staff to account to ensure that we respond to complaints within the target times, that we keep the customer

informed if there is any justified delay, and that the investigating officer completes and returns the complaint outcome report.

Before considering a complaint, we will make every effort to ensure that we have a clear understanding and record of what the customer feels is wrong and what in the customer's view the Council should do to put it right.

The internal complaints procedure has two levels:

- ▶ Level One: The first indication of dissatisfaction requiring a response by a line manager or suitable member of staff.
- ▶ Level Two: An escalated complaint, where the customer is not satisfied by the level one response. This requires a different person to consider the validity of the level one response and to either uphold it or change the outcome.

Where residents raise additional complaints or issues during the investigation, if they are related and the stage 1 response has not been issued, we will incorporate them into the stage 1 response. Where we have issued the stage 1 response, or if the new issues are unrelated to the issues we are already investigating or it would unreasonably delay the response, we will log the new issues as a new and separate complaint.

The responsibilities of staff investigating complaints are as follows:

- ▶ First we will assess the risk identified in the relevant complaint.
- ▶ We will prioritise issues based on the risks identified.
- ▶ Fully investigate the circumstances of the complaint.
- ▶ Speak to all relevant parties and establish the facts.
- ▶ Decide whether to uphold the complaint or not.
- ▶ Consider whether any redress is appropriate.
- ▶ Ensure that we cover all aspects of the complaint in our response.
- ▶ Respond to the complainant within the agreed timescales. Where this is not possible, we will inform the customer. In most cases any extension should not be for more than a further 10 days. At this point we will also give the customer the contact details for the relevant Ombudsman service.
- ▶ Provide a response to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known. We will not wait until we have completed the outstanding actions required to address the issue. Instead, we will track the actions and ensure that we complete them promptly, providing appropriate updates to the resident.
- ▶ Seek to prevent a recurrence or future problems, particularly where we have been at fault.
- ▶ Ensure that the response clearly sets out the next step for the customer if they do not accept the decision.

The complaint response must confirm to the resident, in writing, using clear, plain language the following information:

- ▶ the complaint stage.
- ▶ the complaint definition.
- ▶ the decision on the complaint.
- ▶ the reasons for any decisions made.
- ▶ the details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- ▶ details of any outstanding actions; and
- ▶ details of how to escalate the matter to the next stage if the individual is not satisfied with the response.

Putting things right

Where something has gone wrong in our processes or the way we have delivered a service, we will do what we can to put things right.

Where we could have done things better, we will:

- ▶ Apologise
- ▶ Acknowledge where we went wrong.
- ▶ Provide an explanation or reasons.
- ▶ Act to rectify a situation if there has been delay.
- ▶ Reconsider our decision and change it if appropriate.
- ▶ Amend records or add a correction or addendum if appropriate.
- ▶ Provide a financial remedy if appropriate.
- ▶ Review and, if appropriate, change policies, procedures, or practices.

If we offer a financial remedy, it will reflect the impact on the customer as a result of any fault identified.

We will agree any remedial action we have identified with the customer where appropriate. We will clearly set out what will happen and by when and ensure that we follow any action plan through to completion.

What if you are still not satisfied?

If you are not satisfied by our response to the relevant complaint, or at any time during our investigation you can ask the Building Safety Regulator to investigate any safety concerns, and the Housing Ombudsman to investigate our complaint handling.

We will co-operate fully with the relevant Ombudsman and/or Regulator during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting decision, which will be binding on us.

Making a complaint to Building Safety Regulator

You should contact BSR directly if:

- ▶ your building is not on the high-rise building register
- ▶ your Principle Accountable Person (PAP) or Accountable Person (AP) have no policy or process to raise concerns
- ▶ you feel you can not raise a concern directly with your PAP or AP's
- ▶ You are not satisfied with the response from your PAP or AP's, or have unresolved issues.

Contacting Building Safety Regulator

Call

0300 790 6787

*Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
08.30am to 5pm*

Wednesday 10am to 5pm

Closed Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday

Online

www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-building-safety-regulator



Further information

For further information on the compliance report contact the Safety Assurance Team.

Email customer.services@lincoln.gov.uk

Tel 01522 873333

Website www.lincoln.gov.uk

Write to DHI, City of Lincoln Council
City Hall, Beaumont Fee
Lincoln, LN1 1DD



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