



## THE BUCHANAN TRUST

<b>Policy Name</b>	Complaints Policy
<b>Board Approval Date</b>	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
<b>Signed</b>	<i>Helen Thomas</i>
<b>Name/Position</b>	Helen Thomas, Chair
<b>Next Review Date</b>	January 2026

The Buchanan Trust (the Trust) is a registered charity run for the following purpose:

To help those who have served in the armed forces, enabling them to transition into civilian life by offering short term accommodation, accredited training, skills, work experience and employment opportunities in the rural and construction sectors.

The Trust is based at:

Estate Office, North Farm, Bosbury, Ledbury, Herefordshire, England, HR8 1JY

Charity Number: 235867

This policy applies to all trustees, staff and volunteers of the Trust and sets out the procedure of complaints handling by the Trust.

As a Registered Provider of Social Housing and charity, The Trust is signed up to and adheres to the Housing Ombudsman Scheme and Complaints Handling Code which ensures that residents – in the Trust’s case beneficiaries - are put at the heart of the complaints process and ensure that complaints are dealt with in a fair, effective, and timely way. The Trust is required to complete an Annual Self-Assessment form and to review this, and the complaint’s policy, annually herein.



The Trust will endeavour to provide and maintain an acceptable standard of service in all its work and activities. However, there may be occasions when a problem arises resulting in a complaint or grievance from a beneficiary or someone in authority and/or with the legal right to act on their behalf, service user, tenant, a service provider, a trustee or a member of the public.

The Trust will review and improve their services where necessary on a regular basis, which involves giving positive messages to staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and others about expressing their views.

We will ensure that we:

- Listen to people's views and concerns
- Act consistently on receipt of comments and complaints
- Keep clear written records of all meetings and/or interactions with the complainant in relation to any complaint
- Reassure those raising a complaint that their residency is not in jeopardy particularly when a complaint relates to housing
- Review our actions, building on positive outcomes
- Learn from identified shortcomings; and,
- Consistently improve.

The Chair, trustees, staff and volunteers of the Trust, should actively encourage persons to comment on their services, especially our beneficiaries. This will enable improvements in delivery of their services and cultivates trust, openness and accountability.

Our success criteria for dealing with complaints will ensure that:

- We operate a clear and accountable procedure with guidance on how to complain
- We accept complaints verbally (in person or by telephone) or in writing
- We will promote a positive culture about complaints
- We aim to resolve matters speedily to the satisfaction of the complainant; and,
- We will monitor complaints to inform the development of policy and best practice.

### **Procedure for informal and formal comments and complaints**

#### **Informal Stage:**

The majority of minor complaints or concerns should be dealt with at the time to the satisfaction of the complainant. Staff or Trustees receiving a minor concern or complaint which they have not been able to resolve to the complainant's satisfaction, should be reported to the Chair and trustees who will deal with it as an informal complaint.

The Trust will respond to informal complaints that have not been resolved locally and therefore have been escalated within 10 working days.

#### **Formal Stage:**

The complainant should be asked to put the complaint in writing.

If the complaint is about service delivery, the Chair will respond and will consult with any staff, volunteers, trustees or others as needed, taking statements if necessary, before doing so.



If the complaint specifically involves one or more members of staff, volunteers or trustees, the person(s) complained about should be given a copy of the complaint and invited to reply unless to do so would place someone at risk.

The Chair will investigate the complaint and should take statements from anyone involved or who can help. The Chair should decide whether to uphold the complaint fully, or in part, or whether to dismiss it whilst cataloguing the reason for doing so.

Every effort should be made to respond to the complainant within 10 working days by the Chair. A written reply, if so desired by the complainant, should be sent within 28 calendar days.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the response, then they have the right to appeal within 14 calendar days against the Chair's decision to the Board of Trustees for review. The Board will appoint two trustees to form a Complaints Panel, and a Chair will be elected. This Chair shall have a casting vote.

The complainant may be invited to attend and present their complaint with assistance or help as they deem necessary. The complainant's aid may:

- address the hearing but not answer questions on behalf of the complainant
- confer with the complainant during the hearing
- ask questions of the trustee panel members
- confer with the complainant during the hearing, in private if requested.

The Panel should clarify any issues necessary.

The Panel will reach a decision which may be unanimous or a majority verdict.

The Panel will respond to the complainant within 10 working days of the Panel concluding, informing them whether the complaint has been upheld fully, or in part, or whether it has been dismissed.

### **Further Complaints**

The Panel's decision will be final with regards to the Trust; but in the event that the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome, then, depending on the subject and nature of the complaint, complainants have the right to refer the matter to:

- **The Charity Commission** for serious complaints about the running of the Trust as a charity, and/or serious harm to the people the charity helps or other people who come into contact with the charity through its work; a person or organisation receiving significant financial benefit from a charity; criminal, illegal or terrorist activity; charity set up for illegal or improper purposes; charity losing significant amounts of money and a charity losing significant assets, for example land or buildings
- **The Housing Ombudsman** for property condition and repairs, charges and estate management, complaint handling and/or antisocial behaviour affecting you in your home.
- **Fundraising Regulator** for complaints relating to the Trust's fundraising activities.
- **Advertising Standards Authority** for complaints relating to the Trust's advertising.
- Staff – and in some instances, volunteers - can also refer complaints and seek further advice from Advisor, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS), Employment Tribunal Customer Contact Centre.



### **Complaints Log**

The Trust will hold a Complaints Log, whereby formal complaints are logged, to include the findings, actions taken and outcomes.

The Complaints Log will be reviewed annually by the Chair and Board of Trustees.

### **Points of Contact**

The Buchanan Trust email: [info@buchanan-trust.org.uk](mailto:info@buchanan-trust.org.uk)

The Buchanan Trust address: Estate Office, North Farm, Bosbury, Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1JY

Charity Commission <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>

The Housing Ombudsman <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/bring-your-complaint-to-the-housing-ombudsman/>

Fundraising Regulator <https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/complaints>

Advertising Standards Authority <https://www.asa.org.uk/make-a-complaint.html>

Acas <https://www.acas.org.uk/>

EASS <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

Employment Tribunal Customer Contact Centre <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/employment-tribunal-offices-and-venues>

