**Complaints Policy**

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| **Name of Housing Association:** | **St. Patrick’s Parish (Kilkenny) Voluntary Housing Association (also known as St. Patrick’s Trust)** |
| **Date of board meeting at which policy was agreed:** | **October 2023** |

St. Patrick’s Parish (Kilkenny) Voluntary Housing Association is committed to providing an efficient and courteous service to all its tenants. However where tenant feels there is a need for a complaint to be made, the following procedure will be adhered to.

**Receiving complaints**

A person can make a complaint:

* Verbally, in person or by phone
* In writing by email, letter or by submitting a complaint form (all complaints will be recorded on a complaint form)

**Stage 1: Informal Contact/ Complaint**

If you are unhappy with some element of service or perhaps something that was done or not done, you should contact \_\_\_Housing Association to discuss and raise this concern. This is considered an informal complaint.

When this contact is received, particularly by telephone, St. Patrick’s Parish (Kilkenny) Voluntary Housing Association will try to resolve it immediately by providing the required information or taking appropriate action to the satisfaction of the individual. This should be achievable for routine complaints about repairs / rent/ communications etc. The individual will be asked whether he/she is satisfied with the response, and if they are, VHA will consider the matter resolved.

**Stage 2: Formal Complaint**

If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the individual should be informed that they can submit a formal complaint on the matter, which can be done verbally in person, by telephone or in writing or by email. All of these will be recorded on a Complaints Recording form by the housing association.

The individual should receive a prompt acknowledgement of their complaint within 5 working days. They will be advised that they can expect a full response in a reasonable timeframe (e.g. within 20 working days) and the name of the person they can contact about the complaint.

**Stage 3: Further Investigation and Final Decision**

If the complaint has not been resolved to the individual’s satisfaction, a further investigation into the complaint should be undertaken and they should receive a written response from an authorised person in the housing association. This will be the final decision of the housing association on this matter and will be based on all of the evidence available to the housing association.

**Principles in Handling Complaints**

Information about complaints will be collated from the complaint forms and reported to the Management Board. St. Patrick’s Parish (Kilkenny) Voluntary Housing Association will endeavour to:

* Resolve complaints at the earliest stage.
* Ensure the individual is kept informed of progress and has a point of contact with whom they can liaise in relation to their complaint.
* Ensure people from more vulnerable groups (e.g. people with dementia or people from minority groups) receive appropriate support to complain with someone to advocate on their behalf.

**Role of the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB)**

The RTB offers a dispute resolution service through mediation or adjudication to housing association tenants and landlords with more information available at [www.rtb.ie](http://www.rtb.ie) .

Whilst the housing association encourages tenants to fully utilise the internal housing association complaints resolution process before contacting the RTB, the tenant can also utilise the dispute resolution mechanisms at any stage of the process and should notify the person handling the complaint within the association that they have registered a dispute with the RTB if they decide to do this.