

Tandem Property Asset Management Holdings Limited

Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) and Guidance

Tandem Property Asset Management Holdings Limited operates a Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) to manage complaints made against the firm or an individual employee. The CHP follows the principles of the RICS Professional Guidance note 1st edition, July 2016. (Ref: RICS Rules of Conduct – Rule 7).

Tandem's Complaint Handling Procedure includes an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism approved by the RICS and a complaints register. The redress mechanism is dependent upon the status of the complainant as a consumer or business customer.

The primary point of contact for any complaint will be the Tandem Information Officer (IO). A formal complaint can be referred to the IO, by letter, e-mail, in person or by telephone or by form and will be registered to ensure that we have all appropriate details.

The Tandem Information Officer can be contacted through our Customer Service Desk by telephone 0203 942 7997 or email tandem@cs-desk.co.uk with the following heading as reference:

COMPLAINT – CONFIDENTIAL – TANDEM

The complaint should include;

Name and contact details and the Property which is managed by Tandem.

Alternatively, you can submit your complaint in writing to

The Information Officer
Tandem Property Management Holdings Limited
10 Brindley Place
Birmingham
B1 2JB

Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)

When a complaint is confirmed in writing or by e-mail, we will ensure that the complaint is registered and fully understood, and an acknowledged within three working days. The response will include a copy of the CHP document and may include a request further information or clarification.

The complaint will then be carefully reviewed as part of a 4-stage process, which includes escalation to the Senior Directors. If the matter cannot be resolved the matter can be referred to The Property Ombudsman (for Occupiers/Customers)

after 6.5 weeks from the original registration or to the RICS Dispute Resolution Service (Business/Clients).

Tandem's core values will be consistently reflected in our approach to any Compliant:

- All complaints will be acknowledged promptly.
- Complaints will be reviewed to ensure an understanding of the issues and circumstances.
- Will be honest in our review and responses.
- Will always be thorough and rigorous.
- Will always be polite and professional.
- We will take all complaints seriously.
- We will use the process to review and improve any shortcomings in our approach.

Tandem's Complaints Handling Procedure will:

- reflect the size and nature of the Tandem business.
- be available to all staff to provide clarity and consistency.
- ensure the procedures are understood by all staff through appropriate training.
- shared with complainants as part of registration process.
- register all complaints at the earliest opportunity.
- be regularly reviewed at Board level.
- ensure PI cover is not compromised.
- confirm independent redress mechanisms

Guidance to Tandem Employees

At the time of the initial complaint, it is important to listen carefully to the complainant and acknowledge and understand their motivation as part of the resolution process. A complaint may be compounded by the needs of an individual so its important to not be defensive. The customer is likely to be making a complaint about a problem that needs attention and therefore resolution is imperative.

It important to clarify as much detail as possible at an early stage and it may be necessary to go over the basis of the complaint to establish a clear understanding and open lines of communication. It's important to establish the complainant's interest and status in relation to the managed property as it may be from a resident, tenant, customer or third-party stakeholder.

There should always be a true record and understanding of the issues and any areas of uncertainty where clarification may be required. When responding or giving information it should be noted that complaints are covered by data protection regulation (GDPR) in the same way as other data held by Tandem and therefore suitable identity checks may be needed.

Tandem will endeavour to partner with the Occupier/Customer in reaching a resolution to the problem and establish the context of the complaint and what the complainant hopes to achieve, if a loss has been sustained or if any assistance is necessary to meet the desired outcome.

We should clearly set out the stages and time frames within the CHP and confirm that the Information Officer will act as the point of contact for all communication. We should provide the complainant with a copy of the firms CHP within three working days of the complaint being registered.

Evaluating the complaint

At the outset it's important to confirm the responsible Directors at Tandem who will review the complaint in accordance with the CHP. They will evaluate the complaint and ensure that actions are diarised and recorded. The evaluation of a complaint requires prompt engagement and commitment to review the actions with the parties concerned. Any case notes and correspondence should all be properly recorded. The evaluate should consider the significance and potential consequences of the complaint together with any financial or reputational risk.

Initial Response

A good initial response is a positive step on the route to resolution so it's important to demonstrate interest, empathy, accuracy, and reasonableness at this stage. Confirm and double check contact details and clarify facts and evidence provided. Put yourself in the position of the complainant to consider if the response address their concerns.

The tone of the response should meet Tandem's professional expectation and core values and if it is necessary to rebut the complaint an explanation must be given, which is clear and refers to specific circumstances or issues.

Additional Investigations

Following the initial review if the basis of the complaint is unclear or there is insufficient evidence to form a conclusion, then a response should be issued proposing the next steps to be followed, seeking the complainant's agreement to the action proposed.

A further review may include an inspection of the property and the appointment of third-party surveyor or independent party with relevant skills. An independent third party proposed may need to be agreed with the complainant to agree the scope of any investigation and to avoid any reports and advice being challenged. The mutually agreed appointment of third parties is likely to be less costly and confrontational.

The basis of the response needs to consider the responsibility and liability for any costs which may be incurred, and PI Insurers may need to be updated. Inspection notes and reports must be taken and recorded, particularly if a case is escalated to The Property Ombudsman/RICS.

Escalation

Tandem will positively manage a complaint or questions and aim to provide a prompt response and resolve matters quickly. Should a difference of opinion remain, and the initial response does not lead to closure or resolution of a complaint, then continuing negotiation may be necessary. At this stage the CHP sets out the process for escalating the complaint. Should additional facts or assertions be introduced this can also lead to the complaint being escalated.

The CHP also includes a mechanism for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). The ADR provider must have the most suitable knowledge and skills as not all providers cover the same areas of work. ADR is often the preferred approach and should offer more appropriate resolution and cost savings.

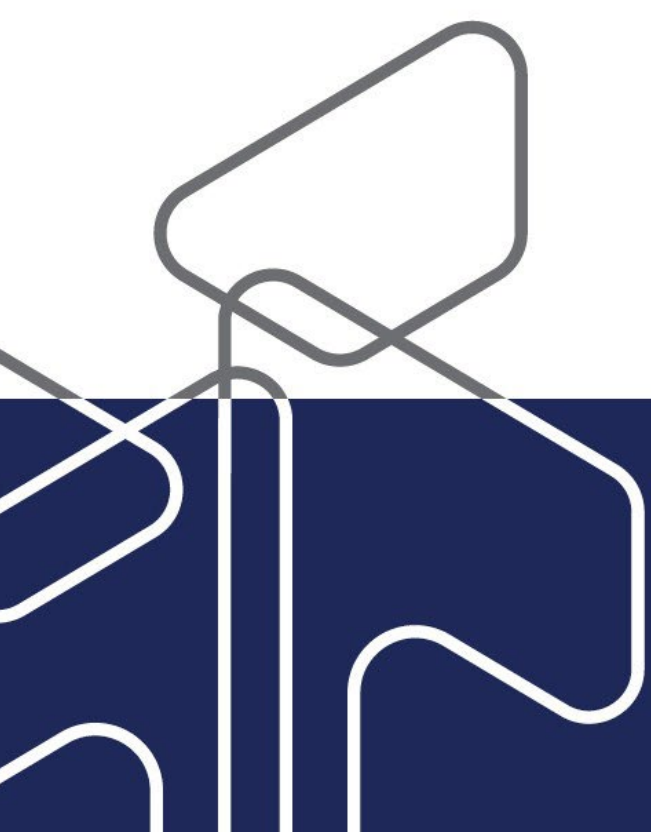
Record Keeping

Tandem's Complaints Handling Procedures is a key part of the business governance and complaints will be always managed rigorously and file management and record keeping should be of the highest standard. As part of the CHP the use of e-mail is likely to be widespread and e-mail communication needs to be retained and managed in the same way as any other correspondence. Formal responses and any proposed action should be prepared in PDF format (referenced and dated) as attachments and not set out in the e-mail itself.

Learning from the experience

It is good practice to review the impact and outcome of any complaints received and to examine all complaints, whether agreed or unjustified. Complaints can lead to financial and reputational risk and cost to the business as they take time to investigate and resolve. As part of resolution, it's important to consider why the complaint was made in the first instance, any misunderstanding and action which could be taken to prevent a recurrence of any issues and misunderstandings. This will underpin Tandem's approach to continuous service improvement and training for all staff through lesson learned. The root cause analysis of complaints is a useful tool and will be a useful subject for internal CPD training.

The CHP should rarely be used, but when followed carefully it will not have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. An annual review of the CHP is good practice.



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