



Policy Title	Complaints Policy
Author	Head of Strategy Assurance
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Applies to	All QVT supported housing schemes and CQC-registered care homes
Contact	complaints@qvt.org.uk Tel: 0208 778 4546
Note	This is the published version of QVT’s Complaints Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees and published in compliance with Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 provision 3.4. The full policy and procedure document, including operational tools and staff guidance, is maintained separately for internal use.

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the process for receiving and handling complaints at Quo Vadis Trust (QVT). It applies to all clients of QVT, individuals on the waiting list for accommodation, and those who terminated their stay within the last 12 months. Family members, advocates, and representatives may also raise complaints on a client's behalf with consent, or where it is in the client's best interests.

Plain-English guides for clients are published separately: "Client Guide - How to Complain (Supported Housing)" and "Resident Guide - How to Complain (Care Homes)". Both are available from Housing and Registered Managers and on the QVT website.

2. Purpose

To ensure that QVT has an effective, fair, and transparent system for managing complaints and complies with all relevant legal requirements, regulations, and best practices. We are committed to providing the highest quality service to everyone we support and work with.

Everyone using QVT services has the right to feel confident in raising a concern, making a suggestion, or offering a compliment. QVT treats complaints as valuable feedback that drives service improvement. Complaint volumes will not be used as a negative measure of team or service performance.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all QVT supported housing schemes and CQC-registered care homes. QVT is a Registered Provider of social housing regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Where a complaint relates to a supported housing service, this policy is written in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, whether the client occupies under a tenancy or a licence to occupy.

Where a complaint relates to a care or support service provided by referral and not as part of a supported housing service (including Elmwood Lodge and Hatherley Lodge care home residents), this policy is written in line with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) Complaint Handling Code. The relevant Ombudsman depends on the nature of the service the complaint relates to, not solely which scheme the client lives in.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC): The Chair of the Board of Trustees of Quo Vadis Trust has been appointed as the Member Responsible for Complaints with effect from July 2026. The MRC is the governing body's primary point of accountability for complaint handling performance. The MRC receives quarterly complaints data, ensures the Board exercises effective scrutiny and challenge, and acts as the primary Board-level contact for the Housing Ombudsman Service. This fulfils Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024 provision 9.1.

The COO holds day-to-day operational responsibility for ensuring all complaints are resolved and that this policy is implemented consistently across all services.

The Complaints Officer is responsible for logging and tracking all complaints, producing quarterly Complaints Themes Reports, co-ordinating with the Housing Ombudsman where required, and maintaining the annual Self-Assessment against the Code. To contact the Complaints Officer: complaints@qvt.org.uk | 0208 778 4546 | 92 Brownhill Road, London SE6 2EW.

Housing Managers are responsible for first-response handling, Stage 1 investigation, and written response to clients.

The Board of Trustees approves the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report and the Self-Assessment each year before publication.

5. Definition of a Complaint

QVT views complaints as expressions of dissatisfaction that require a response, whether communicated verbally, electronically, or in writing. A complaint does not need to use the word “complaint” to be treated as one – if a client tells us they are unhappy with a service, action, or decision, we will treat it as a complaint and give them the opportunity to pursue it formally.

Where a client expresses dissatisfaction through a survey, feedback form, or any other feedback mechanism, QVT will follow up with information on how to make a formal complaint. Any expression of dissatisfaction received through a feedback channel is treated as a complaint trigger.

QVT will ensure that its complaints process is fair, transparent, and accessible, and does not discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Reasonable adjustments will be made for complainants who need them. Information is available in alternative formats on request.

6. How to Make a Complaint

You can make a complaint in whatever way is easiest for you:

- Speak to any member of staff or your Housing or Registered Manager.
- Phone us on 0208 778 4546.
- Email us at complaints@qvt.org.uk.
- Write to us at 92 Brownhill Road, London SE6 2EW.
- Ask a family member, advocate, or representative to raise it for you.

You do not need to use any special words or forms. Just tell us what happened and what you would like us to do about it.

7. Complaints We May Not Be Able to Accept

QVT accepts all complaints unless there is a valid reason not to do so. Every complaint is considered on its own individual merits. We may not be able to investigate a complaint where:

- It has already been fully investigated and answered through this procedure.
- Legal proceedings have started (defined as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim having been filed at court).
- It was raised more than 12 months after the event or the client becoming aware of the issue. This is not an automatic bar – we will consider whether to exercise discretion where there is good reason to do so.
- It concerns a third party or an organisation unrelated to QVT’s services.

If we decide not to accept a complaint, we will always explain why in writing and tell you about your right to ask the relevant Ombudsman to review that decision.

8. The Complaints Procedure

Stage 1 – Frontline Resolution

When a complaint is received, the team member will make every effort to resolve it immediately to the satisfaction of the complainant. If not resolved at first contact, the complaint is referred to the Housing or Registered Manager and documented.

Formal acknowledgement of all complaints (verbal or written) will be sent within 5 working days, confirming who is handling the complaint, QVT's understanding of the issue, and the outcome the client is seeking – with an opportunity for the client to correct this if inaccurate. A full Stage 1 response will be provided within 10 working days. If this is not possible, the complainant will be informed and given a revised date. Extensions must not exceed a further 10 working days and, at the point an extension is agreed, the complainant will be given the relevant Ombudsman's contact details.

Stage 2 – Formal Review

If the complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 response, they may escalate to Stage 2. They are not required to explain their reasons for doing so. Stage 2 is reviewed by a senior team member not involved in Stage 1. A full written response will be provided within 20 working days. Extensions must not exceed a further 10 working days and, at the point of any extension, the complainant will be given the relevant Ombudsman's contact details.

The Stage 2 response is the final internal response. The complainant will be informed of their right to refer to the relevant Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied.

9. Timescale Summary

Stage	Standard timescale	Maximum extension
Acknowledgement (both stages)	5 working days	N/A
Stage 1 response	10 working days	+10 working days (with notification and Ombudsman details)
Stage 2 response	20 working days	+10 working days (with notification and Ombudsman details)

10. Your Rights as a Complainant

Making a complaint will never be held against you. QVT will not take any tenancy or placement enforcement action – including eviction – because you have made a complaint, however the complaint is raised. Where QVT considers tenancy or placement action is separately warranted, this will only be pursued on its own grounds and via due process, entirely separate from the Complaints procedure. QVT will never discourage you from contacting the Housing Ombudsman Service or the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and will never obstruct your right to do so. You may contact either Ombudsman at any stage – including before our internal procedure is complete if you have concerns about delays or how your complaint is being handled.

11. Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Complaints

In a small number of cases where a complainant's behaviour is abusive, threatening, or designed to harass staff, QVT may impose proportionate restrictions on the manner of contact. Any restriction will be documented, communicated in writing with clear reasons, reviewed at least

every three months, and will not affect the complainant's right to contact the relevant Ombudsman. New complaints from a complainant subject to restrictions will still be assessed on their individual merits. Tenancy or placement enforcement action will not be taken as a consequence of vexatious or persistent complaint behaviour.

12. Governance and Annual Reporting

The COO produces a quarterly Complaints Themes Report shared with the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees via the MRC. An Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report is produced each financial year and published on the QVT website alongside the Board's formal response and the annual Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Both are approved by the Board of Trustees before publication.

Staff guidance on which Ombudsman applies to each service type – including dual-jurisdiction cases – is set out in the Ombudsman Jurisdiction Matrix held within QVT's internal Complaint Handling Staff Tools document.

13. If You Are Still Not Satisfied

If your complaint is not resolved after Stage 2, or if QVT has not kept to the timescales set out in this policy, you have the right to refer your complaint to an independent body. All services listed below are free of charge.

- Housing Ombudsman Service (for supported housing complaints) PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ Tel: 0300 111 3000 | info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk | www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (for care home and social care complaints) PO Box 4771, Coventry CV4 0EH Tel: 0300 061 0614 | www.lgo.org.uk
- Care Quality Commission (to report concerns about care quality – does not investigate individual complaints) Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4PA | Tel: 03000 616161 | www.cqc.org.uk Parliamentary
- Health Service Ombudsman (for NHS-funded services) Millbank Tower, Westminster, London SW1P 4QP | Tel: 0345 015 4033 | www.ombudsman.org.uk

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman or the LGSCO at any point during our process – you do not have to wait for our internal procedure to be completed.

14. Contact Us

To make a complaint, ask about this policy, or request it in an alternative format: Telephone: 0208 778 4546
Email: complaints@qvt.org.uk Online: <https://qvt.org.uk> Post: Quo Vadis Trust, 92 Brownhill Road, London SE6 2EW. This policy is available in large print, easy-read, audio, or another language on request.

Version History

Role	Action	Date
Head of Strategy Assurance	Authored v2	March 2025
COO	Reviewed	June 2026
CEO	Reviewed	June 2026
Chair of the Board of Trustees (MRC)	Approved	June 2026
Board of Trustees	Approved for publication	June 2026