

## How are complaints handled?

We aim to provide a high quality effective and sensitive service to our customers. We realize, however, that sometimes our service may not be as good as we want it to be. We welcome complaints because only by letting us know if you think you have been treated unfairly or received poor service can we put things right and improve our future performance. **We treat complaints in the strictest confidence.**

This document tells you who can complain, who you can complain to, how long it will take to get a reply, and whether you can receive any compensation

## Who can complain?

Anyone who receives a service from us can complain, such as tenants, shared ownership residents, and anyone applying for re housing. Also, anyone who is not satisfied with our service can complain.

## Where to complain

If you have a complaint about us, you should let us know as soon as possible. You can call into our office or contact us in writing, by e-mail or by phone. (If you live in a scheme with a scheme manager, you can tell them.)

## Dealing with complaints at source

Whenever a complaint is made we will try to deal with it informally at source within five working days. If a complaint remains unresolved after five working days, or is not dealt with to the satisfaction of the complainant the complaint is advanced to stage one of our formal complaints procedure.

## Stage one – Unresolved complaint

An unresolved complaint will be referred to the relevant service area and a full response will be sent within five working days, addressing all points raised and notifying the complainant of any action that has been undertaken as a result. If it will take longer than five working days to respond we will acknowledge the complaint and tell the complainant how long it is likely to take to receive a full response.

## Stage two – Director Review

If the complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome of Stage one, they should notify us that they would like to advance their complaint to Stage two of the process, explaining the reasons why they are dissatisfied with the outcome of Stage one.

The Director will then fully investigate the complaint and a full response will be sent within five working days, addressing all the points raised and notifying the complainant of any action that has been undertaken as a result. If it will take longer than five working days to respond we will write to the complainant about when they are likely to receive a full response.

## Stage three – Chief Executive Review

If a complainant does not feel that their complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily so far they should tell us that they would like to advance their complaint to Stage three of the process, explaining the reasons why. The complaint will be dealt with by the Chief Executive who will fully investigate the complaint. A full response will be sent within five working days, addressing all the points raised and notifying the complainant of any action that has been undertaken as a result. If it will take longer than five working days to respond we will write to

the complainant about when they are likely to receive a full response.

## Stage four – Panel Review

If a complainant still does not feel that the complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily they can request that it is advanced to Stage four, explaining why they are dissatisfied. Stage four gives the complainant the opportunity of a final and personal hearing with our panel who will review how the complaint has been dealt with. The panel consists of at least two Board Members, some of whom may be tenants.

The panel will be convened within 28 days of a request to advance a complaint to Stage four. Once this hearing has taken place a final response confirming the outcome of the Appeals Panel will be sent to the complainant within five working days.

The Appeals Panel is the final stage of our Complaints Procedure.

## Independent Housing Ombudsman

If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Panel they can contact the Ombudsman, an independent body which governs our activities. The Ombudsman will want to make sure that any complaint referred to them has followed our complaints procedure before they deal with it. The Ombudsman can be contacted in any of the following ways:

Tel: 02074 213800      Lo-Call: 08457 125973  
Minicom: 02074 047092 Fax: 02078 311942

In writing: **Housing Ombudsman Service 81 Aldwych London WC2 4HN**

E-mail: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)  
Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

## Other agencies

It may be useful to get independent advice at any stage, but particularly early on in your complaint. You can contact other agencies such as Citizens Advice or a Law Centre, and they may be able to help you sort out the matter.

## Mediation

We can arrange for an independent person to mediate if both sides feel that this will be an effective way of sorting out any agreement.

## Compensation

We will compensate anyone who has lost money due to us not providing a service or breaking an agreement. You may also be entitled to compensation if we have failed to complete a qualifying repair within our set target times, and failed to complete the work after further request within the target times. For more information about the right to compensation, please ask for our leaflet on compensation.

To claim compensation, you should send full details to the housing services director or property services director, depending on the nature of your complaint.

## Monitoring complaints

We record and analyse all complaints we receive. By monitoring complaints, we can identify problems quickly and sort them out so we can improve our service.

As well as monitoring complaints, we also monitor compliments and welcome favourable comments about our service

# Complaints Policy



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association

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