

Your guide How to make a Complaint



We aim to provide a high quality effective and sensitive service to our customers. We realise, 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 leaflet 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 owners and leaseholders, and anyone applying for re-housing.



Where to complain

If you have a complaint about us or the service you have received please let us know as soon as possible by

completing a Complaint Form and returning it to our offices, by email, on-line via our website or by fax. If you live in a scheme with a scheme manager, you can hand it to them.

Dealing with complaints at source

Whenever a complaint is made it will be passed to the person best able to resolve your complaint. They will try to respond and deal with your complaint informally within five working days. If you are not happy with the response or outcome you can ask for your complaint to be reviewed by the relevant service manager/Director using our standard complaints form.

Stage one – Manager/Director Review

An unresolved complaint will be referred to the relevant service manager or director who will reply with a full response within five working days, they should address all points raised and notify you 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 inform you that you will receive a full response within 28 days.

Stage two – Chief Executive Review

If you do not feel that your complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily so far you should tell us that you would like to advance your complaint to Stage two of the process, explaining the reasons why. This must be done within 28 days of the date of the stage one response letter. 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 you 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 you and inform you that you will receive a full response within 28 days.

Stage three – Complaints Appeal Panel Review

If you still don't feel that your complaint has been dealt with satisfactorily you can request that it is advanced to Stage three, explaining why you are dissatisfied. This must be done within 28 days of the date of the stage two response letter. At this stage it is necessary for the complaint to be in writing with a full explanation of why you wish to move to the next stage. Stage three gives you 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 members, made up of tenants and Board members.

The panel will be convened within 28 days of a request to advance a complaint to Stage three.

Once this hearing has taken place a final response confirming the outcome of the Complaints Appeals Panel will be sent to you within five working days.

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

Designated Person and the Housing Ombudsman

Once our internal procedure is completed, and if you are not satisfied with the response from the Complaints Appeal Panel you can approach a 'designated person', who is either their local Councillor or MP.

Designated Persons can liaise with us on your behalf to try to resolve the complaint. They also have the power to refer you to the Housing Ombudsman.

Alternatively, you can wait 8 weeks after receiving the panels' decision, after which you can approach the Housing Ombudsman directly, however you must make the complaint to the Ombudsman within six months of its conclusion.

The Housing Ombudsman is an independent service set up to look at complaints about housing associations that are registered with them. Their service is free, independent and impartial.

The Housing 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
Website: 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, and they may be able to help you sort out the matter.

The Financial Ombudsman Service

The Financial Ombudsman Service is an independent service set up to resolve individual disputes and if your complaint is about an activity that falls within their jurisdiction, such as our Money Advice Service or Home Cash Plan, you can approach them after our internal procedures have been exhausted.

You can contact them in the following ways:

Tel: 0800 023 4567 (Freephone)

Email: complaint.info@financial-ombudsman.org.uk

In writing: The Financial Ombudsman Service
Exchange Tower
London
E14 9SR

Website: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

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.

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

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