

COMPLAINTS

- Definition of a Complaint
- Matters that are not Complaints
- Procedure for resolving Complaint
- Independent Housing Ombudsman

Definition of a Complaint

The Association defines a complaint as:

- an expression of dissatisfaction about action or lack of action or about the standard of a service.
- a decision which the complainant believes is not fair or clear
- an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the behaviour of our staff or contractors

Matters that are not Complaints

A request for service is not a complaint. For example, reporting a broken window is not a complaint. A report that the Association has failed to repair it within the allocated response time is a complaint.

A report of anti-social behaviour on the part of another resident is not a complaint. If we failed to respond to it in accordance with our Anti-social behaviour policy, you could then make a complaint.

An approach made after we have started court proceedings will not be treated as a complaint.

We also reserve the right not to treat as complaints reports that are frivolous or vexatious.

Procedure for Resolving Complaints

- **Stage One Complaint – To a Manager**

If you are not satisfied with the response to your informal approach, you may make a formal complaint to the Housing Services Manager either in writing or by requesting a meeting.

The Housing Services Manager will either acknowledge the complaint in writing or arrange to meet you at the earliest mutually convenient time within five working days. You can bring a representative or a friend to the meeting. The Housing Services Manager will provide a written response within 10 working days of receiving the complaint.

- **Stage Two Complaint: Appeal – To the Chief Executive Officer**

You will be informed in the Housing Service Manager's response that if you are still not satisfied, you may take your complaint to the Chief Executive Officer. The complaint will be acknowledged within five working days, and the Chief Executive Officer will normally reach a final decision on the complaint within 10 working days of receiving it.

- **Stage Three Complaint: Appeal – To the Board of Management**

If you are still not satisfied, you may inform the Chair of the Association's Board of Management and a panel of Board members will then hear and respond to your complaint. Any papers prepared for the meeting will be copied to you in advance to give you the opportunity to send your comments to us beforehand.

- **Final letter**

When the procedure has been completed a final response letter will be sent to the complainant. It will contain:

- A summary of the complaint
- A summary of the outcome of our investigation
- A statement in which the Association either acknowledges or does not acknowledge that it has been at fault
- Any offer made to settle the complaint and how long that offer will remain open
- An apology or expression of regret that the complaint was necessary
- A clear statement that the letter is the final response
- A statement that if you are still not satisfied, you may refer your complaint to the Independent Housing Ombudsman at:

**The Independent Housing Ombudsman
81 Aldwych
London
WC2B 4HN**

**Tel: 020 7421 3800
Fax: 020 7813 1942**

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk