

COMPLAINTS

Why have a complaints procedure?

Clydebank Housing Association aims to provide a first class service but there may be occasions when you are not happy about something, and if this is the case it is important for you to tell us.

The aim of this complaints procedure is to give you clear details of what steps you can take to try and get things put right where there is a problem.

The complaints procedure also gives us the chance to keep an eye on the quality of service we provide so that we can continually work to improve on it.

Who can use the complaints procedure?






Anyone who receives or requests a service from Clydebank Housing Association can use the complaints procedure. This includes tenants, people applying for housing, owners or sharing owners and people living in the neighbouring property.

The procedure is also open to people who may be acting on your behalf, such as a Councillor, Member of Parliament, advice agency or solicitor (but as you will see later, we do encourage you to sort things out with us first).

If you belong to a tenants' group or residents' association and would prefer to ask them to help you complain we will be happy for them to contact us on your behalf.

What can you complain about?

You can complain about any aspect of our service that you are unhappy about, for example: -

-  if a repair has not been carried out properly
-  if you have not received information you have asked for
-  if you feel that a member of staff, a committee member or a contractor has not behaved reasonably towards you
-  if you feel your housing application has not been handled properly
-  if you feel you have been unfairly discriminated against

Complaints against neighbours will be dealt with under our neighbour disputes procedure. But if you have a complaint about the way we have dealt with a neighbour dispute, then you can use the complaints procedure.

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We will always try to deal with complaints sympathetically, but there are some things we will not be able to give you information about. For example, it would be wrong for us to discuss with you the details of someone else's housing application, as this would be a breach of confidentiality, but we can of course talk to you about how our allocations procedure works.

Trying To Sort Things Out Informally

You have every right to make a formal complaint whenever you wish to, but in the first instance it can often be quicker and easier for everyone if the problem can be sorted out informally; the choice is yours.

To try to resolve a problem informally, the best thing for you to do is to talk to (or drop a line to) your housing officer or any other officer if this is appropriate, and let him or her know what you would like to be put right. He or she will let you know how long it should take for the problem to be sorted out, and hopefully a solution will be reached.

The Formal Complaints Procedure

If the problem has not been sorted out informally, you should in the first instance complain to the section head at Clydebank Housing Association's office. If you have a complaint about a member of staff you should write to the Director. Complaints about the Director should be sent to the Chair of Clydebank Housing Association's Committee.



When you make a complaint it is really important for you to let us know exactly what the problem is and how you would like to see it resolved. We would encourage you to do this in writing wherever possible, but if this is not easy you can complain by telephone or in person. If the relevant person is not available your complaint will be noted by the person who speaks to you and passed onto them.

If you have made a complaint by telephone or in person, the member of staff who notes the complaint will check with you that they have taken a correct record, and you will normally be asked to sign it. In this way everyone is clear on what the complaint is about.

Whether you have complained in writing, by phone or in person, we will write to you within three working days to acknowledge that your complaint is being dealt with.

We will then write to you again within two weeks of receiving the complaint to let you know the outcome. Do please remember that some things may not be within our control and may therefore be less easy to sort out.

If you are not happy with the response you will be able to use the appeals procedure.

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Taking Your Complaint Further – Appeals Procedure

If you do not feel that staff have resolved your complaint satisfactorily, you can appeal to the Association's Management Committee. Although it is this committee which is responsible for considering your appeal, it has passed this task to a Complaints Sub-Committee, which has three members and meets as and when required.

Complaints of a very serious nature may be dealt with by the full Committee of the Association.

After you have written to the Chair of the Management Committee s/he will write to you within three working days to acknowledge receipt of your letter.

If, in addition to your written complaint, you are keen to talk to the Sub-Committee, you can do this and if you want to bring along a friend or adviser (for example from a Citizens Advice Bureau) then this is fine.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee will write to you within three working days of the meeting to let you know the decision. If you are not happy with it you will normally be able to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) investigates individual complaints against housing associations and co-operatives. This is a free and impartial service, and a leaflet about it is available from our office.

The service is available to anyone who receives a service from a housing association or co-operative, or who has applied to one of them for housing.

Please note: normally you must have gone through the Association's own complaints procedure before the Ombudsman can consider your complaint.

SPSO Contact Details

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH6 6SA

Or FREEPOST

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)
FREEPOST EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

Tel 0800 377 7330
Fax 0800 377 7331
Email ask@spsso.org.uk
Website www.spsso.org.uk

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Confidentiality

We will as far as possible respect the confidentiality of your complaint. Whilst we are looking into your complaint your name will not be divulged any more than is absolutely necessary within the Association, and if your complaint goes to the Chair of the Complaints Sub-Committee then other Committee members will not be told who has complained.

You will appreciate, however, that if your complaint involves another tenant or a member of staff it may be very difficult for us to look into this without talking to that tenant or staff member. If you ask us not to talk to the tenant or staff member we will try to respect your wishes, but it will probably not be possible for us to take any action to tackle the problem.

It will not normally be possible for us to deal with anonymous complaints as it is obviously difficult to check things with the person making the complaint.

Getting Independent Advice

We would always hope that a problem can be sorted out informally.

However, you may feel it is important for you to get independent advice before you decide whether to complain to us formally. Advice agencies in this area include: -

-  Welfare Rights Service
-  Citizens Advice Bureau
-  Law Centre
-  Solicitor

Recording and Monitoring Complaints

Complaints can help us as well as you! All formal complaints made to the Association are recorded and reported to the Director who will regularly advise the Management Committee of changes or improvements the Association may be taking as a result of complaints received.

Improving Our Service To You

Complaints are not the only way of telling us what you think of the service we provide! We always welcome suggestions on how we can improve things so if you have any ideas about this please let drop us a line.

YOU ARE STRONGLY ADVISED TO OBTAIN LEGAL ADVICE BEFORE WITHHOLDING YOUR RENT. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU WRONGLY

WITHHOLD RENT. IT IS ESSENTIAL IN ALL CASES THAT ALL THE RENT WITHHELD IS PLACED IN A SECURE ACCOUNT AND THAT YOU CAN PROVIDE EVIDENCE OF THIS.

