

Ombudsman

If you are still not happy about how we have dealt with your complaint you can appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman investigates how public authorities, including Housing Associations, have handled complaints. An information leaflet is available from our office.

You can contact the Ombudsman at:

4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS Tel: 0870-011-5378.

Who will know about my complaint?

We will as far as possible respect your confidentiality while we investigate your complaint.

If you appeal, and this is considered by our Committee's Complaints Panel, only the Chairman of the Panel will know your name, unless you are invited to attend the Panel's meeting to present your case.

And finally.....

We hope that the information and advice in this leaflet has been clear and helpful to you, but if you need more information about making a comment or complaint please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you have any suggestions about ways we might improve this leaflet, we will be happy to hear from you.

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How to comment or complain about our services

Our aim is to **'get it right first time'** – but we realise that we will not always achieve this. This leaflet explains how you can make a comment or complaint about our services.

Letting us know your views is important as it gives us the opportunity to put things right.

Who can comment or complain?

Anyone who requests or receives a service from us – for example an applicant, tenant, factored owner - can use this procedure.

If you prefer, someone acting on your behalf such as a Councillor, Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) or the Chairperson of a local Tenants' Association can comment or complain on your behalf.

What can you comment or complain about?

You can make a comment or complaint about any aspect of our service, for example:

- The standard of the repairs or the way the work has been carried out.
- How well or otherwise we provide you with information you have asked for.
- The way we respond to any contact from you - especially if you feel that a member of staff, Committee Member or contractor has behaved badly towards you.
- How we dealt with your application for housing
- If you feel that you have been discriminated against in any way.

What this does not cover

This procedure does not cover complaints about neighbours. These are covered by a different procedure, but if you have a comment or complaint about the way we have **dealt** with a disagreement or dispute involving your neighbours, then you can use this procedure.

Anonymous Complaints

We will not be able to deal with anonymous complaints.

Sorting things out informally

Many problems can be sorted out quickly and informally by speaking to the member of staff who deals with the matter. We would encourage you to use the informal approach first.

To help you ask for the right person:

- If your comment or complaint is about a housing or maintenance matter - contact your Housing Officer
- If it is about a member of staff's behaviour ask for the Head of the section concerned, or ask for the Chief Executive if it is about a Head of section
- If it is about the Chief Executive, ask to leave a message for the Chairman of our Management Committee.

If you are not sure who to ask for, our Reception staff will help you. The member of staff you speak to will let you know what can be done about the matter and how long it should take for the problem to be sorted out.

Formal Complaints

While we would hope that most problems can be sorted out quickly and informally, you do have every right to make a **formal complaint** in writing.

Wherever possible you should try to send in your complaint within 2 weeks of the event or incident you are not happy about, or within 2 weeks of receiving our reply to an informal complaint.

Making a Formal Complaint

Please send a letter or the form enclosed with this leaflet, giving as much detail as possible, to one of the following:

- If your complaint is about an aspect of our services or a member of staff please write to the Head of the section concerned.
- If it is about a decision or action by a Head of section please write to our Chief Executive.
- If it is about the Chief Executive, please write to our Chairman.

You may want to have some independent advice before you decide to complain to us formally, and some of those who could help you are:

- Citizens Advice Bureau - tel: 432977
- Your local Councillor - phone West Lothian Council on 777000
- A solicitor (but you may have to pay for this service)

What will happen next?

We will write to you within 3 working days to acknowledge that your complaint has been received.

We will look into your complaint and will write to you again within 2 weeks to let you know the results of our investigation.

Your complaint may be a complicated one and we may need more than 2 weeks to finish our enquiries. If this is the case we will still write to you at the end of 2 weeks to let you know what is happening and give you an estimate of when we think we will be sending you a final reply.

If you are still not happy

If you feel that your complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily, or you are unhappy with the reply, you may appeal. In our letter replying to your complaint we will let you know who you may appeal to, and when your appeal needs to be received for us to consider it.

We will acknowledge receipt of your appeal letter within 3 working days and let you know who will look into your appeal and what will happen next.



COMPLAINTS FORM

Name _____

Address _____

What do you wish to complain about?

Please give as much detail as possible, use a separate sheet of paper if required.

Signed _____ Date _____



COMMENTS FORM

Name _____

Address _____

What do you wish to make a comment about?

Please give as much detail as possible, use a separate sheet of paper if required.

Signed _____ Date _____