

## Complaints Procedure

Shire Housing Association Ltd is committed to providing high-quality customer services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our service, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

### What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

### What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- dissatisfaction with Shire Housing Association Ltd policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint.

### What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints-handling procedures. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example a first-time request for a housing repair or action on anti-social behaviour
- requests for compensation from Shire Housing Association Ltd
- things that are covered by a right of appeal. For examples:
  - if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you have the right to appeal against the decision.

- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision. If you are still not satisfied, please go to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint.

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

### **Who can complain?**

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint'.

### **How do I complain?**

You can complain in person at our office, by phone, in writing, email or via our complaints form on our website.

It is usually easier for us to resolve complaints that you make quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to do to resolve the matter.

### **How long do I have to make a complaint?**

Normally, you must make your complaint:

- within six months of the event you want to complain about, or
- within six months of you finding out that you have a reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please contact us to explain why.

## **What happens when I have complained?**

Our complaints procedure has two stages.

### **Stage 1 - frontline resolution:**

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why and tell you what you can do next. We might suggest that you take your complaint to Stage 2.

### **Stage 2 - investigation:**

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. If you are making a complaint at Stage 2, please provide as much information as possible in relation to the complaint, as this will make it easier and quicker for our staff to help you.

When using Stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain unhappy and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days we will tell you. We will agree revised time limits with you and keep you updated on progress.

### **What if I'm still not happy?**

After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO cannot normally look at:

- a complaints that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In person      SPSO  
4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7NS

By post SPSO  
Freepost EH641  
Edinburgh  
EH3 0BR

Freephone 0800 377 7330  
Online contact [www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us)  
Website [www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)  
Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

## Care Complaints

If your complaint relates to a care service we provide you can choose whether to complain to us or the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting the Care Inspectorate:

They have several [offices around Scotland](#)

Or

Telephone 0845 600 9527  
Fax 01382 207 289  
Online [complaints form](#)  
Email [enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

## Factoring Complaints

### Complaints to the Scottish Housing Regulator

If we are persistently failing to deliver services that meet the standards that are expected of us, and you have complained to us but you are still dissatisfied, you can complaint to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

### Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our

service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or Citizens Advice Bureau.

**Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance**

Tel: 0131 260 5380 Fax: 0131 260 5381 Website: [www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice Scotland**

Website: [www.cas.org.uk](http://www.cas.org.uk)

Or check your phone book for your local bureau.

We are also committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, tell us in person.

**Our contact details**

Please contact us by the following means:

In writing:

Shire Housing Association Ltd

Netherthird House

Netherthird, Cumnock

KA18 3DB

Or:

Tel: 01290 421130

Fax: 01290 428025

Email: [info@shirehousing.com](mailto:info@shirehousing.com)

Web: [www.shirehousing.co.uk](http://www.shirehousing.co.uk)

This leaflet in other languages and formats (such as **large print**, audio and Braille).

## Quick guide to our complaints procedure

### Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail or in writing.

We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detailed investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated of our progress.

### Stage 1 – frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, **within five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

### Stage 2 – investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

### The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to consider it.

We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision. They are also available in this leaflet.