



Complaints Handling Procedure

Hull Churches
Housing
Association

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If things go right, we like to hear it. We can learn from that to improve our services. We also want to know if something goes wrong. We can learn from that too.

This leaflet includes a complaints' form and tells you what you can expect from us when you make a complaint.

If you want to know more about other ways of giving us feedback, you can read more on our website, or ask for a hard copy of our Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy.

We will make reasonable adjustments that may help you access and use our services.

Please contact us if you prefer to learn about this leaflet or any of our other documents and processes in a different way.

Giving us feedback

Most problems are best resolved by a prompt, informal discussion, but it is easier to resolve problems if you contact us quickly.

In the first instance contact a member of staff on site. They will try to resolve any problems on the spot.

If you do not feel comfortable talking to a member of staff on site, you can raise a concern in person at Studio 701, over the phone, in writing, or through our email.

When talking to staff, we will ask if you believe your concern is ground for a complaint and remind you of this complaints' procedure booklet and form.

We log all expressed concerns as comments, so we know when issues were first raised and what action was taken to resolve it.

When there is a concern about crime, abuse of a vulnerable person, or an important health and safety issue, your complaint will also be reported to the appropriate authority.

If you do not want to give us your details, we will log your concern as an anonymous comment, but we will not be able to investigate further or respond to you.

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 services provided by us or on our behalf.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services.

If you want to know our full definition of a complaint, you can find this in our comments, compliments and complaints policy. You can ask any member of staff for a copy.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- repeatedly failing to provide a service
- repeatedly failing to meet our standards of service
- dissatisfaction with our policies and procedures
- treatment by, or attitude of a member of staff

What can't I complain about?

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

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem, a fault that needs to be repaired, or initial action on antisocial behavior.
- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal.
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal

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

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within 12 months of the event you are complaining about. In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit has passed. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please let us know why.

How do I make a complaint?

If you want to make a complaint, you can complete the form in this booklet or write to us. Please ensure the form or your letter is signed as no formal action will be taken in response to anonymous complaints.

When complaining, tell us:

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

Send the form or letter for the attention of the Complaints Officer, to **Hull Churches Housing Association, Studio 701, 17 Princess Street, HULL, HU2 8BJ**

Alternatively, you can email: **info@hullchurcheshousing.org.uk**

We will acknowledge receipt of a complaint by letter within 5 working days. We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint and keep you regularly informed about the process.

Getting help making your complaint

We know that not everyone is comfortable putting things in writing, but we do need your own record. A friend, relative or an advocacy service such as Citizens Advice Bureau can write on your behalf if you give them consent.

We will also be happy to assist you to put a complaint in writing. Staff will complete a complaint form and ask you to sign it.

What happens after I have complained?

Stage one - Investigation

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and may contact you to discuss your complaint with you so that we both have a full understanding of the issues and expectations.

If we can resolve your complaint at that time, we will do so. This could mean an on-the-spot apology, and immediate action to resolve the problem. It may also mean that we explain why we are unable to meet your expectations, i.e., this would breach compliance with regulations.

After a full investigation, we will reply to your complaint within 10 working days. Where there is a delay, for example, if we are waiting for information from a third party, or need to monitor contractor performance, we will write and explain the reason for the delay.

Our formal response will include a summary of our findings and actions proposed. If you also need our response in an alternative format, we can provide this on request.

Stage 2 - Escalation

If you feel we have not resolved your complaint at Stage 1, you can ask for it to be escalated to a Stage 2 complaint. You need to do this within 28 days of getting our formal response to our investigation. You will get acknowledgement of the escalation from a senior manager within 5 working days.

During Stage 2 the details of your original complaint, the results of the investigation and the Association's response will be reviewed by a panel of senior managers.

You will be offered:

- copies of the investigation papers provided to the panel
- opportunity to add additional information and comments.

The panel will then arrange a meeting to review your complaint within 10 working days of escalation. If this is not possible, we will explain the reason for the delay.

You will be invited to this panel meeting and present your case in person. If you choose to do so, you can have a friend, relative or advocate present.

After further discussion, a senior manager from the panel will then write you a formal response in the form of a letter, no later than 10 working days after the Panel meeting.

What is in the Formal Response Letter?

This letter will contain a full response to every aspect of your complaint:

- a summary of the findings
- proposed actions to rectify your specific scenario, and who will be responsible for those actions.
- explanation for when we cannot meet your expectations, for example, where things are outside of our control, if this would be against the law or where we are bound by the Regulator for Social Housing requirements.

Because this letter concludes our internal complaints handling process, it also reminds you of your right to refer your complaint to external organisations and how to do so.

If you prefer, we will provide our response in an alternative format also or explain the contents of the letter in person.

Learning from this process

Once your complaint is closed, we may ask you about your experience of this complaints handling process.

What if I remain dissatisfied?

At the end of our internal process, we remind you of how to refer your case externally, however, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Services directly **at any time** for advice.

The Housing Ombudsman's service investigates disputes between tenants and landlords about any housing issues, but predominantly whether landlords adhere to the complaints handling code and their own policy and procedures, which vary from landlord to landlord.

You can contact this service by letter, phone, or via their website:

**Housing Ombudsman Service - Housing Ombudsman Service,
PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET**

Tel. 0300 111 3000 or www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

The Housing Ombudsman may not get involved:

- If more than 12 months have passed since you first became aware of the matter that you are complaining about.
- If the matter does not affect, or causes injustice, to you personally.
- If you have a right to appeal or take legal action, and it is reasonable for you to have done so, the Ombudsman may not investigate the complaint.
- If it involves issues that affect many people within an area. These should be directed to the Regulator for Social Housing.

Reporting a Significant Performance Failure to the Housing Regulator

A significant performance failure is something that we do, or fail to do, that puts the interests of all our tenants at risk.

Significant performance failures are not between one individual tenant and their landlord and are therefore not dealt with through this complaints' procedure.

If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, nor informed you of planned actions, you can report it directly to the Regulator of Social Housing.

The Regulator also has information on their website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/information-for-tenants>

Housing Related Support Complaints

If your complaint is about support services for which you were referred to us by the council, you can:

- Visit <http://www.hull.gov.uk/support-adults/carers/adult-social-care-feedback-and-complaints>
- call 01482 300300
- send your complaint in writing to the Contact Coordinator, Adult Social Care, Strategic Service Development Team Warehouse 8, Guildhall Road Hull, HU1 1HJ.