

BLOCHAIRN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

Blochairn 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 that you tell us. This procedure tells you what to do if you want to make a complaint. It also allows us to monitor the quality of service we provide; to continually work to improve it and to learn from our mistakes.

2. What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about something we have done or something we have failed to do; or about our standard of service. For example,

- a repair has not been carried out properly
- you have not received information you asked for
- you feel that you have not been treated reasonably
- you feel your housing application has not been handled properly
- you feel you have been unfairly discriminated against

Not every concern raised with us is a complaint. For example, a complaint is not

- a first request for a service
- a request for information
- a request for an explanation of our policy or practice

There might be things we can't deal with as a complaint, for example

- insurance claims
- if we have already investigated and given a final decision on a complaint
- if the matter is being considered by a court or a tribunal

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

We will always 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 talk to you about details of someone else's housing application. We can, of course, talk to you about how the allocations procedure works.

3. Who can use the Complaints Procedure?

Anyone who receives or requests a service from us can use the Complaints Procedure. The procedure is also open to people who may act on your behalf, such as, a councillor, MSP, MP, advice agency or solicitor. Independent advice is important. You may want to consider getting advice from, for example, a Citizens Advice Bureau, a solicitor or a Law Centre.

4. Complaints Procedure Stages

There are two internal stages in the Complaints Procedure.

Stage 1: Frontline Resolution.

We aim to resolve your complaint within 5 working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We might take action to put the matter right or we may offer an apology. We may also move a complaint immediately to Stage 2 if urgent action is required or to fully assess the complaint.

Stage 2: Investigation:

Complaints might not be resolved at Stage 1 or might be complex and require further investigation. We aim to resolve these within 20 working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If we need more time we will let you know and explain our reasons. If you don't agree, we will review the matter, taking your concerns into account.

Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman (SPSO)

When we provide a decision after our investigation we will give you a written response. If you are dissatisfied or unhappy at the outcome you have the right to contact the SPSO to request an independent review. This is the final stage in the Complaints Procedure. You can contact the Ombudsman

- Using the Freephone Advice Line 0800 377 7330
- On line at www.spsso.org.uk/online-contact
- In person at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7NS
- By post at FREEPOST EH641, Edinburgh EH3 OBR

5. Complaints Process

A complaint will be accepted by any member of staff and can be made by phone; e-mail or text message; in writing, by letter, or using our standard form; or in person through personal contact with our staff.

The staff member who receives the complaint will clarify with you

1. What exactly the complaint is
2. How you would like to see the problem resolved
3. Whether they can provide the solution requested
4. If they cannot provide the solution, what happens next?

The staff member will tell you what we can do to deal with your complaint and it may be appropriate to confirm this in writing. If we can't deal with your complaint at the first contact, either because you are not satisfied or the complaint requires further investigation, our staff member will tell you. We will write to you within 5 working days. If we need more time to deal with your complaint at Stage 1, and a further 5 days is required, we will let you know. We will only consider an extension in exceptional circumstances.

6. Investigation Stage

Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure is the investigation stage. We will write to you within 3 working days confirming that an investigation will be carried out and you will receive a full written response within 20 working days. If we need more time (up to 20 working days), for example, where the complaint involves complex issues, we will let you know.

7. Anonymous Complaints

We value all complaints, including anonymous complaints. Whether we investigate an anonymous complaint may depend on whether enough information has been provided. It may not be possible for us to deal with an anonymous complaint if we cannot check things with the person making the complaint.

If you have a complaint but you do not want us to record it we would emphasise that the complaint gives us an opportunity to improve services where things have gone wrong and it allows us to tell you what action we take. If you still do not want to complain we will record the issue as an anonymous complaint.

We will respect the confidentiality of your complaint. If it 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 we might not be able to take any action to tackle the problem.

8. Complaints about staff or committee members

If you have a complaint against a member of staff you should write to the Director. Complaints about the Director or Management Committee should be marked "Private & Confidential" and sent to the Chairperson of the Management Committee at the Association's office.

Blochairn is a small organisation employing the lowest number of staff to keep costs to our tenants as low as possible. We do not have different layers of management to pass complaints to. We do not normally pass complaints to an outside agency, for example, a solicitor, because this will attract costs. However, we will make sure that the person that the complaint is about is not involved in any investigation or the decision making process to deal with the complaint. In doing this we will also make sure that the response to the complaint is proportionate to the nature of the complaint. There are outside agencies that we may consult with, such as, the Scottish Housing Regulator and Employers in Voluntary Housing.

A serious complaint about senior staff or committee is a 'notifiable event' and the Scottish Housing Regulator will be notified. The Regulator's expectations on serious complaints against senior staff can be found on the Regulator's website.

9. How do we record and monitor complaints?

We will record complaints, including type, status, source, etc., as outlined in Appendix 1, and we will record what we did to try to resolve the complaint. The investigating officer will update our records, detailing our actions and the outcome of your complaint, and will ensure that any follow-up work is undertaken.

We will monitor complaints through

- a regular statistical report to our Management Committee. This will not contain any information which can identify any personal details
- our Annual Report to our Members, copied to our tenants and other residents
- occasional items in our newsletter
- an annual report to the Scottish Housing Regulator

We will keep our Complaints Procedure under review and will take account of guidance from the SPSO or Scottish Housing Regulator.

10. Improving our service to you

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

May 2018