

KINGSRIDGE CLEDDANS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MAKING A COMPLAINT

COMPLAINTS POLICY



**Policy reviewed by
management committee
28th May, 2019. Next review
May, 2024**

Making a complaint

Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association are committed to providing a quality, professional and responsive service to all our residents. We are however realistic enough to recognise that from time to time standards of service may not be delivered to your expectations or disagreements may arise in the handling of a problem or complaint.

The Association wish our residents to be fully aware that they have the right to complain should they be unhappy with any aspect of their dealings with the Association and for this reason we have the following procedure for dealing with complaints.

The Association has adopted The Model Complaints Handling Procedure which was developed by The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

Our definition of a complaint is:

An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Association's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of The Association.

There are 2 main stages to our complaints process.

Stage one: Frontline Resolution

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straight forward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage. The main principle is to seek early resolution. Types of complaints which may be considered at this stage include:

- Where a rent payment direct debit has been set up wrongly
- Where a contractor did not attend to carry out a repair as we had agreed
- Where the quality of a repair carried out is not satisfactory

It is not practical to provide an exhaustive list of complaints and those listed above are examples only. Our staff can provide further information on complaints at this stage and suggest possible actions to achieve resolution.

Frontline resolution should be completed within 5 working days or sooner. In exceptional circumstances we may agree an extension of no more than an additional 5 days with the customer. This would normally only happen in circumstances where we need to get information from other services, contractors or agencies.

When closing a complaint at this stage, we will notify the customer of the outcome. Notification may be verbal or in writing. The complaint will be closed and our complaints system updated accordingly.

Stage two: Investigation Stage

Complaints will be escalated to the Investigation stage when:

- Frontline resolution was tried but the customer remains dissatisfied and requests an investigation into the complaint.
- The customer refuses to take part in the frontline resolution process.
- The issues raised are complex and require detailed investigation.
- The complaint relates to serious, high risk or high profile issues.

An investigation aims to establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and to give the customer a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position.

The following deadlines apply to all cases at the investigation stage:

- Complaints must be acknowledged within 3 working days
- We will provide a full response to the complaint as soon as possible but not later than 20 working days from the time we received the complaint for investigation.

Not all investigations will be able to meet this deadline. For example, some complaints can be so complex that they require careful consideration and investigation beyond the 20 day limit. However, such cases will be the exception and we will always try to deliver a final response to the complaint within 20 working days.

Any extension to time will be agreed with the customer who will be given a reason for the delay and will be provided with a revised timescale for completion.

When closing a complaint at this stage we will let the customer know the outcome in writing or by their preferred method of contact. Our response will address all the areas we are responsible for and explain the reasons for our decision. We will record the decision and details of how it was communicated to the customer, on the complaints recording system. Our response will advise that the customer has the right to ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to consider the complaint. We will advise them of the time limit for doing so and provide information on how to contact the SPSO.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. This includes complaints about Housing Associations. If you remain dissatisfied with the Association after our complaints process has been concluded, you can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint.

The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints where you have not gone all the way through the Association's complaints handling procedure, or more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you wanted to complain about, or if the matter has been or is being considered in court.

The SPSO's contact details are:

**SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS**

**SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 OBR**

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://spsso.org.uk>

Who can use the complaints procedure?

The procedure is open to anyone who receives, requests or is affected by a service from the Association.

Sometime a customer may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint on their own. We will accept complaints from third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

What types of complaints will be investigated?

The Association will accept complaints about any aspect of our service which complainants are unhappy about. Examples of complaints will include:

- If a repair has not been carried out properly.
- If information requested has not been issued.
- Unreasonable behaviour from a member of staff, committee, or contractor.
- If a complainant has been discriminated against.

It should be noted that it is not practical to provide a list of exhaustive complaints and those listed above are examples only.

What is not a complaint?

The Association will always try and deal with complaints sympathetically but there are some areas we are not able to deal with or give information about. These include the following:

- A complaint about a neighbour will not go through the complaints procedure unless it is a complaint about the way in which the Association has handled the complaint. The Association has a separate policy on neighbour disputes/anti social behavior.
- The Association will not discuss another person's circumstances with a third party complainant as it is not appropriate and breaches confidentiality. For example, we will not discuss why a third party was allocated a house as opposed to a complainant but we would of course talk to the complainant about how the Allocations Policy and Procedure is applied.
- Complaints where there is a separate right of appeal through a policy. For example a customer may complain they were not given enough housing need points to take into account their current housing circumstances. The customer has the right of appeal under the Allocations Policy. If the customer remains dissatisfied about how we applied the policy or administered the process, the complaint could go through the CHP.
- Complaints for compensation only are not complaints and will not be handled through the CHP. However, where a customer wants to complain about the matter leading to their request for compensation we can consider that as a complaint but treat the claim for compensation separately.

Recording, reporting, learning and publicising

We will ensure that:

- All complaints are recorded
- We report performance and analyse outcomes
- Make changes to service delivery where appropriate
- Publicise complaints performance externally
- Tell customers about service improvement.

This information provides a brief summary of the key points of The Complaints Handling Policy and Procedure. Our staff will be happy to provide further information on any aspect of the policy and we will also provide a copy of The Policy on request.