

Lochfield Park Housing Association Ltd
Complaints Handling Procedure
Customer Guide

Lochfield Park Housing Association Limited, 37 Drumlanrig Avenue, Easterhouse, Glasgow, G34 0JF
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Registered with The Financial Services Authority, No 2444R(S) The Scottish Housing Regulator No HAC268 Scottish Charity No SC037694

Foreword

This Complaints Handling Procedure reflects Lochfield Park's commitment to valuing complaints. It is designed to help us resolve customer dissatisfaction quickly and as close to the point of service delivery as possible through thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints.

The procedure has been developed by The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, with significant input from housing complaints handling professionals, to produce a standardised approach to handling complaints across the sector. Underpinning the procedure is the ethos of 'getting it right first time'. The emphasis is firmly on quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early resolution by empowered and well trained staff.

Complaints provide effective and valuable information to improve customer satisfaction. This complaints handling procedure will not only allow us to address customer's dissatisfaction, but also, where appropriate, provide learning opportunities to prevent the problems that gave rise to the complaint from happening again. For the staff providing customer services, complaints provide a first-hand account of the experience and perspective of the service user, and can highlight problems in service delivery that may otherwise go undetected. We recognise that handled well, complaints can be invaluable in providing our customers with a form of redress where things go wrong, and can also inform our drive for continuous improvement of services.

There are considerable benefits to be realised in terms of cost savings and better relations with customers, whenever a complaint can be resolved early. By encouraging resolution of complaints as close to the point of service delivery as possible many customers will have their concerns resolved locally, quickly and effectively, thereby reducing the potential for escalation of the complaint to the next stage of the procedure. Complaints that are not resolved swiftly can and do have a significant impact on the overall workload of Lochfield Park.

The introduction of this Complaints Handling Procedure will deliver real operational benefits for our organisation as well as improving public perception and relationships with our service users. It will help us to deliver a complaints handling service which keeps the service user at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand where service provision can be improved through the organisational learning resulting from complaints.

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 our 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.

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 that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti-social behaviour
- Requests for compensation
- Our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example: if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority that you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or tribunal
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our **final** decision following a stage 2 investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask 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.

How do I complain?

You can complain in Person at our office, by phone, in writing, by email, or by using our online complaints form at:

www.Lochfield.co.uk

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff about the service you are complaining about. They can then 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 wish 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 wish to complain about, or
- 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 tell us why.

Contact Details

Lochfield Park Housing Association Ltd

37 Drumlanrig Avenue, Easterhouse, Glasgow, G34 0JF

Tel 01417712228

Fax 01417730015

Email: info@lochfield.co.uk

Web: www.scottishhousingconnections.org/HA/Lochfield-Park.co.uk

What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

Stage One: 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 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. If you are still dissatisfied, you can ask for your complaint to be investigated further through stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or some time after you get our initial response. We can help you with making this request.

Stage Two: 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.

When using stage 2, we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days.
- Discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied 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 dissatisfied?

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 complaint 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 Text phone: 0790 049 4372

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

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

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Complaints about factoring

The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about our factoring service. The First Tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing & Property Chamber) will try to resolve complaints between home owners and property factors. You can find more information at: Website: **housingandpropertychamber.scot** Tel: **0141 302 5900**

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 at:

Email: concerns@careinspectorate.gov.scot

The Care Inspectorate complaints procedure, contact details and offices around Scotland, and information about how to complain are all on their website at **careinspectorate.com**

Or you can contact them by:

Telephone- 0345 600 9527

Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.gov.scot

Reporting a Significant Performance Failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systematic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. 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, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure. Significant performance failures are not, therefore dealt with through this complaints handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website:

scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

or you can phone them on: 0141 242 5642

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 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 510 9410** E-mail: enquiry@siaa.org.uk Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: www.cas.org.uk or check your phone book for your local bureau.

We are 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 please tell us.

We can also give you this leaflet in other languages and formats (such as large print, audio and Braille).