

Lanarkshire Housing Association Limited

Complaints Handling Procedure – A Customer's Guide

Lanarkshire Housing Association is committed to providing a high quality customer service. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and advises on 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?

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

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure such as:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or an initial report of 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 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 a 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 provide you with information and advice.

Who can complain?

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

How do I complain?

You can complain in person or in writing by using our complaint form attached and sending it to Lanarkshire Housing Association at 191 Brandon Street, Motherwell ML1 1RS. Alternatively, you can complain by telephone on 01698 269119 or by email to enquiries@lanarkshireha.com. You can also visit our Website at www.lanarkshireha.com for further information.

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly, so please talk to a member of our staff at the department responsible for the service you are complaining about as they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong?
- how you want us 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
- 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 and if you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, then please tell us why.

What happens after 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 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 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 and 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 three working days
- discuss your complaint with you in order 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

We will tell you if our investigation will take longer than 20 working days and 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 your complaint, 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
- 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:	By Post:	Freephone:	0800 377 7330
SPSO	SPSO	Online contact:	www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Bridgeside House	Freepost EH641	Website:	www.spsso.org.uk
99 McDonald Road	Edinburgh	Mobile site:	http://m.spsso.org.uk
Edinburgh	EH3 0BR		
EH7 4NS			

Complaints about factoring:

The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about our factoring service as the Housing and Property Chamber addresses complaints and disputes between home owners and property factors. Further information is available from our office.

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself and for this reason we accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a representative, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

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'. This is defined 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, then please report this to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it to the SHR. More information about significant performance failures is available at <http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/> or you can phone them on **0141 271 3810**.

Can I obtain a payment to cover my efforts and inconvenience in complaining?

If a complaint is upheld, you can ask for a Time and Trouble Payment to cover the reasonable cost of your effort and inconvenience in having to pursue a complaint along with the cost of any minor expenditure incurred. This is a goodwill payment which will be at the discretion of the Association and you will be advised how to apply for this, in the event of your complaint being upheld or partially upheld.

Equality Issues

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).

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 on 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 SPSO to consider it. We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

NOTE : IF YOU WISH A REPRESENTATIVE TO MAKE A COMPLAINT ON YOUR BEHALF, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SO THAT WE CAN BE SURE YOU HAVE CONSENTED TO THIS:

Person making complaint on your behalf : _____

Relationship to you: _____

Reason for representative submitting complaint: _____

Your signature: _____

Date: _____

**Return this form to: Lanarkshire Housing Association Ltd.
191 Brandon Street
Motherwell
ML1 1RS**

Or e-mail it to enquiries@lanarkshireha.com

Lanarkshire Housing Association Limited processes personal data to assist in its legitimate aims and those of certain third parties. The Association's principal aims are to provide, manage and maintain social housing and low cost home ownership. Secondary aims will include property management services for owner occupiers and commercial leaseholders, and associated functions will include administering enquiries and complaints, the prevention and detection of fraud or other criminal acts and the recovery of debts.

This information may be disclosed to other bodies in certain circumstances. For example, there may be disclosures to contractors (to attend a property), to the police (to assist in their investigations), to the Local Authority (to assist them in the administration of housing benefit/council tax) or to the Scottish Housing Regulator (for the purposes of inspection and regulation). Further details can be found by consulting the Scottish Information Commissioner's website (www.foi.scot).

By providing us with this information you automatically give your consent for the purposes specified.