



## **Signature Supported Housing CIC – Complaints, Compliments & Comments Policy 2017**

### **Overview**

The information below explains how we manage complaints made by tenants and residents about the service they receive from us.

Please note that we publish separate information to explain how we investigate reports of neighbour nuisance or other ASB.

### **Making a Complaint**

We try to provide the best possible service at all times, but we don't always get it right. When this happens, we want to know about it and we treat all complaints very seriously.

You have the right to complain about any aspect of the service you receive from us. You may want to complain if you feel we have:

- Failed to do something that we should have done
- Failed to follow our policies or procedures
- Done something that we should not have done
- Done something badly.

However, a complaint is not:

- An initial request for a service, such as the first report of a repair
- An initial request for information or an explanation
- About ASB as these complaints are dealt with under another procedure
- An appeal against action resulting in court proceedings or matters subject to on going court proceedings.

If you choose an alternative route to resolution, such as an insurance claim or legal action, we will not consider the matter under the complaints procedure until this route has been exhausted. In addition, the Association will be unable to investigate complaints relating to issues over six months old unless there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances.

We will accept a complaint from you in a number of different ways. You can:

- Telephone us (0333 305 5220 Option 3)
- Write to us Signature Supported Housing CIC, C/O Northwest Housing Solutions, 19 Devonshire Road, Liverpool, L8 3TX Mark it 'OFFICIAL COMPLAINT'.
- Email us: dean.wall@ssh.org.uk

If our service is not up to standard, we will apologise and try to remedy the situation as quickly as possible.

### **Important information:**

When you make a complaint, every effort will be made to try to resolve the matter straight away. This is because our customers have told us that, if possible, they would prefer us to address the issue quickly without having to go through a formal process. If your complaint cannot be resolved quickly, we will treat it as a formal complaint.

### **Complainants**

Anyone who receives a service from us, is affected by a decision or action taken by us, or who represents such a person can make a complaint. Examples include:

- Tenants, service users, licensees, ex-tenants
- Applicants for housing
- Partnership agencies managing properties in conjunction with the Group
- Contractors or consultants
- Neighbours of our properties

Agencies and others representing the person wishing to make a complaint, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau, MPs, Councillors, support workers, family members, friends or neighbours.

### **! Important information:**

We will need to be satisfied that anyone representing you has your permission to act for you and we may have to ask you to confirm this.

### **Compliments or Comments**

We encourage feedback from all stakeholders, and encourage any suggestions to improve our services, we also appreciate any compliments, you can give a compliment or comment using the above contact methods.

### **Formal Complaints**

#### **Investigation and resolution**

When we receive your complaint we will acknowledge it within three working days, giving you a reference number and the name of the person who will deal with your complaint. Your complaint will be investigated by a member of our team.. They will work with a to try to resolve your complaint. We aim to send you a full response to your complaint within ten working days.

If you feel that we have not properly considered the complaint, or if we find that there has been no service failure but you have new information, you can ask for a review of the complaint. You can do this by:

- Returning the slip we have included in the response letter
- Calling into our office and we will complete this slip with you
- Ringing us and we will take your response over the phone
- Emailing us with your response.

## **Review**

When we receive your request in writing for a review we will acknowledge it within three working days. We will aim to arrange for the review by a panel of board members take place within twenty working days. The panel will review the reasons you have given as to why you remain dissatisfied. The review panel will aim to send a written response to your complaint within ten working days of the meeting.

### **! Important information:**

Although most complaints will go through this process, there are some situations when this does not happen. Appeals against a decision we have taken to end a starter tenancy demote a tenancy or end a demoted tenancy will go straight to a Review. In addition the board reserves the right not to hold a meeting to review a case where the agreed actions to put things right have been completed or if the complaint is vexatious.

## **Closing a Complaint**

We will close your complaint when:

- You tell us that we have resolved your complaint, or
- We haven't heard from you within 28 days of the completion of our investigation and resolution, or
- Following a review.

## **Designated Persons**

After a review, you can take your complaint to a 'designated person,' who may help to resolve your complaint. A designated person can be an MP or Local Councillor.

The designated person will consider the written details of your complaint and our efforts at resolution. They may be able to offer a resolution, which we must both agree to.

Following consideration by a designated person, an MP or councillor may refer your complaint to the Ombudsman or you can refer your complaint directly. If you don't want to refer your complaint to a designated person, you can wait eight weeks (from the review) and then make a direct referral to the Ombudsman.

We will provide you with further guidance on 'designated persons' and the Ombudsman if resolution is not achieved through our complaints process.

## **The Housing Ombudsman**

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints about housing providers. The service is free, independent and impartial. In order to consider your complaint, the Ombudsman will normally require you to have exhausted our own complaints procedure in the last 6 months and to have either received your complaint as a referral from a designated person or for you to have waited for 8 weeks following receipt of the outcome of our review.

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at:

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service, 81 Aldwych, London WC2B 4HN

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Minicom: 020 7404 7092

Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

[www.ihos.org.uk](http://www.ihos.org.uk)

## **Further information**

You can contact us for further information on making complaints and a copy of our full policy and procedure is available on request. Alternatively, there are a number of other individuals and agencies that may be able to help. These include the Citizens Advice Bureau (or other independent advice agency), your local MP or Councillor.