

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Introduction

This Leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

Weslo Housing Management is committed to providing high quality services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us to improve our services.

We recognise that there may be times when you are dissatisfied with our services. It is important for you to tell us so we can put it right.

In accordance with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's guidelines, information about our complaints is also included in our Tenant Handbook.

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf

What you can complain about?

- Delay in responding to your enquiries and requests
- Failure to provide a service
- Our standard of service
- Dissatisfaction with a policy
- Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or a contractor
- Our failure to follow proper procedure.

There may be some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure

What you can't complain about?

- A routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repeated

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 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.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at our offices, in writing, by email, by telephoning us or using our complaints form, a copy of which can be found on our website. A copy of our complaints form is also available on request. A member of our staff can assist you to complete the form if you need help.

Corporate Services Manager
Weslo Housing Management
66 North Bridge Street
Bathgate
EH48 4PP

Tel: 01506 634 286
Email: complaints@weslohm.co.uk
Website: www.weslohousing.org

It is easier to resolve your complaint if you tell us about it quickly, making it clear what your complaint is about and how you would like it resolved. You can do this by speaking directly to a member of the staff in the service area concerned to give us the opportunity to try to resolve any issue 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 12 months of:

- The event you want to complain about, or
- Finding out you have reason to complain, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

In exceptional circumstances, we may accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

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

Stage 1 – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and an explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action taken to resolve the problem.

To try to resolve the problem informally, we would ask that in the first instance you contact your Housing Officer or any other Officer if this is appropriate and let them know what you would like put right. It is important to let us know exactly what the problem is and how you would like us to resolve it.

We will give you our decision at Stage 1 in 5 working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Most Stage 1 complaints will be resolved verbally, face to face or on the telephone so we may not need to write to you. However, we will write to you if we think it will help to confirm or clarify the facts or outcome of the complaint for you, or if you request a response in writing.

At Stage 1 - we will:

- Record the complaint as a Stage 1 complaint;
- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within one working day; (acknowledgement could be via email, telephone, face to face or written)
- Discuss your complaint with you to understand the reason for your dissatisfaction and what outcome you are looking for;
- Give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible or within 5 working days.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why. If we require additional time to gather information or if we need to conduct a more detailed investigation, we will move your complaint to the next stage in our process.

Extension

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to obtain information from another part of our organisation in order to resolve your complaint at Stage 1; this is known as a Stage 1b Extension. Should this be the case, we will contact you to update you on our intended actions and provide you with a revised timescale for a response. This will normally be within 10 working days.

Stage 2 – investigation

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage are typically complex or require a detailed examination before we can state our position. These complaints may already have been considered at the frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as needing immediate investigation.

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

At Stage 2, we will

- Record the complaint as a Stage 2 complaint;
- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 3 working days;
- Discuss your complaint with you to understand why you are 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 a revised timescale with you and keep you updated on progress. We will record details of the action taken and the outcome as this helps us improve our service standards.

What happens if I am still dissatisfied?

Following a full investigation, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have 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 (please make sure it has done so before contacting 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:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
4 Mellville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Website www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

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

Complaints about Factoring

The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about factoring services.

First Tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing & Property Centre) will try to resolve complaints and disputes between home owners and property factors. If your complaint is about a factoring service and you are still dissatisfied after our investigation stage you will be able to go to First Tier Tribunal for Scotland.

You can contact First Tier Tribunal for Scotland

In person:

Housing & Property Chamber
First Tier Tribunal for Scotland
Glasgow Tribunal Centre
20 York Street
Glasgow G2 8GT

Telephone: 0141 302 5900 – Fax: 0141 302 5901

Email: HPCAdmin@scotcourtribunals.gov.uk

Website: www.housingandpropertychamber.scot/contact-us

They are open from 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Reporting a significant Performance Failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues reported to 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.

Significant performance failures are not, therefore, dealt with through the complaints handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website:

<http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk>

Or you can phone them on: 0141 271 3810

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure.

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 will take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your 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

Telephone 0131 260 5380

Fax 0131 260 5381

Website www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website www.cas.org.uk

Or check your telephone book for your local bureau

You might also wish to contact a solicitor, the Welfare Rights Service or a Law Centre.

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 you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, please tell us and we will do our best to assist you.

A QUICK GUIDE TO OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints Procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing. We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly, however 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 and within 5 working days if we can. In some circumstances additional investigation may be required and the Stage 1 resolution timeline may be extended to ten working days this is called Stage 1b Extension.

If you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1, you can ask us to consider moving your complaint to the next stage in our process which is Stage 2 Investigation.



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 and need a more detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days. We will give you our decision as soon as possible and certainly within 20 working days unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time. If more time is required, we will keep up informed.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

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.