



St Luke's Housing Society Limited – Useful Information

Complaints

Why is there a Complaints Procedure?

We want to provide a high quality service which is fair and consistent, to all our tenants. We aim to always treat all tenants, contractors and visitors with respect and whenever possible to get things 'right first time'. If we fail in these objectives, we welcome comments and complaints from any person who may feel they have a grievance.

Usually problems can be resolved quickly and amicably without using the formal complaints procedure. However there *is* always the option of using the formal complaints procedure. If you feel you have not been treated properly or have received poor service from us, please tell us. As well as enabling us to investigate your complaint, this may help us to provide a better service in the future.

St Luke's Housing Society is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. The Housing Ombudsman can investigate complaints that have not been resolved using an internal complaints procedure.

You may feel it is appropriate to approach an external body if you believe there is an immediate health, safety or legal issue, which is not being dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

How do I use the Complaints Procedure?

Due to the small staff we acknowledge that we need to be flexible in handling any complaints. If you are uncomfortable for any reason with the person it is suggested you make the report to, you may approach the General Manager, House Manager or any Board Member with your initial complaint. They may, however, need to pass it on to the appropriate person to investigate and respond.

Stage One

The normal reporting mechanism is to register a formal written complaint. Forms are available from the office to help you make your complaint clearly, or you can write a letter if you prefer. This should normally be directed the manager of the person who has failed to provide the standard of service you expect. That is:

- General Manager - report to the Chairman of the Board
- Other staff - report to the General Manager
- If the complaint concerns a Board member, external contractor, or other person please address the complaint in the first instance to the General Manager.

She/he will either investigate the situation themselves, or refer it to the person best placed to investigate. We will respond to your complaint in writing within 21 days of receipt (and usually more quickly).

Stage Two

If you do not feel that the Stage One complaint has been properly investigated and/or that the response is not satisfactory you should formally ask that the complaint be referred to the Society's full Board of Management. The Board will also respond with their decision within 21 days of receiving the complaint.

Stage Three (optional)

If you are still dissatisfied with the response it is recommended that you refer your complaint on to a 'designated person'. This is likely to be a Councillor or local MP. We will give you contact details if you need them. The 'designated person' will investigate your complaint, and can also refer it directly to the Housing Ombudsman if they believe this is appropriate.

Stage Four

If all stages of the internal procedures have been exhausted, the complaint can be referred to The Independent Housing Ombudsman who has authority to investigate serious complaints made against registered Housing Associations. (If you have not used Stage Three of the complaints procedure, you need to wait 8 weeks in order start this stage.)

The Independent Housing Ombudsman may be contacted at:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Website address: <http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0300 111 3000 (lines are open Monday to Friday from 9:15 to 17:15)

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

This is all very formal – can't we just sort it out?

We hope so. We think that with staff working on site, regular Tenant meetings and a willingness to listen to what you tell us most problems can be resolved amicably. When there is a delay (for instance to a repair), we will do our best to keep you informed.

However, we are *required* to have a formal Complaints Procedure in place. We also think it is reassuring to tenants to know that they have this option open to them.