ST LUKE'S HOUSING SOCIETY COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY 2026

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Approved By:	Board of Trustees

1. INTRODUCTION

- We are committed to providing a high-quality service to all residents and service users and we strive to get things right first time. We understand that despite our best efforts, things can go wrong. This means some of our service users will be dissatisfied and unhappy with the level of service we have provided.

- We welcome all feedback, including when things have gone well, and not so well. This helps us shape the services we deliver and helps us learn from our successes and our mistakes. If we have been unable to put things right and you are still unhappy, you can make a formal complaint to us.

- Our aim is to provide our residents with comfortable homes and facilities that are safe and enjoyable to live in. We endeavour to give our residents the confidence to report complaints to us, safe in the knowledge that their concerns will be dealt with competently and sensitively by our staff.

- We want our service users to have easy to access to tell us when things go wrong, so we can address any concerns both promptly and professionally. We hope residents will trust us to act on the information and feedback they give us.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework and Compliance

Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Framework – Consumer Standards

2.1 We have written this policy in line with the 'Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard' of the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Framework Consumer Standards.

2.2 The framework requires us to make sure that complaints are addressed fairly, efficiently, and promptly. We must make sure out approach to complaint handling is simple and that information about how to make a complaint is easily accessible to our residents.

Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 & Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code 2024

2.3 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 placed a duty on the Housing Ombudsman to issue a code of practice about the procedures registered providers/members must have in place when managing complaints.

2.4 The Housing Ombudsman established a Complaint Handling Code which provides a framework to support the effective handling and prevention of complaints. As a small, registered provider of housing, we are legally obliged to follow the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which became statutory on 1st April 2024.

2.5 The purpose of the Code is to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by their residents quickly and to use the learning from complaints to make service improvements. Compliance with the Code forms part of the membership obligations set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

2.6 Our Complaints policy and supporting information has been written in alignment with the regulatory framework. Our complaints information outlines our approach to managing complaints in accordance with the mandatory and best practice guidance.

2.7 St Luke's Housing Society, along with other landlords are required to complete an annual assessment against the Complaint Handling Code. This is to make sure our complaint handling is compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's requirements.

2.8 We will hold ourselves accountable for any mistakes we make and will be honest and transparent in our annual report on complaints when submitting these to the Ombudsman.

2.9 We will make sure copies of the self-assessment and annual complaints handling report are made available to our residents. We will publish on our website and alongside our resident satisfaction surveys.

2.10 Our Head of Operations will oversee our Complaints Handling process and St Luke's Housing Society will appoint a designated Trustee to support with complaints. The designated Trustee will also investigate any Stage 2 Complaints.

2.11 We will include Complaint Reporting at our Quarterly Board meetings to review how we have managed our complaints.

3. Definition of a Complaint

The Housing Ombudsman Service Complaint Handling Code 2024 defines a complaint as:

'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.'

3.1 You might contact us to complain about being unhappy because we have:

- done something badly or wrong.
- done something we should not have done.
- failed to do something we should have done.
- treated you unfairly or without respect.
- failed to deliver what was promised.

Complaint Example:	You report that your shower is not working and are told that an engineer will attend to repair. You have phoned and left several messages chasing this up, but nobody has been out, and you have not heard anything two weeks after making the first report.

Complaint Example:	You put in a transfer application as you want to move to a ground floor property due to health reasons. The member of staff you gave it to did not complete the reference for you so it has delayed your application.

3.2 Definition of a Service Request

'a request from a resident to the landlord (or organisation working on their behalf) requiring action to be taken to put something right.'

This will usually be the first time you have made us aware of your dissatisfaction with our service. Service requests are not considered to be complaints.

Service Request Example:	• Asking us to complete a repair. • Requesting information about your rent account. • Reporting an anti-social behaviour / nuisance complaint.

3.3 If you are dissatisfied with our response to a service request, then we will consider this to be a complaint and we will follow the process laid out in this policy.

4. Exclusions

4.1 There are some things we won't consider under our complaints process which are listed below. However, we will use our discretion and consider if there is an exceptional need or reason to do so.

- The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
- Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the Claim Form and Particulars of Claim, having been filed at court.
- Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- Issues relating to our rent reviews as we are guided by the government.
- Anti-Social Behaviour complaints – these are managed via our Anti-Social Behaviour policy. We will accept complaints if it relates to something we have done wrong regarding our case management.

- Complaints relating to the setting of service charges that can be referred to the First Tier Tribunal (www.gov.uk/courts-tribunals/first-tier-tribunal-propertychamber).

- Complaints about matters outside our control including legislation, government or local authority policy.

- Anonymous complaints unless they are of a concerning nature.

4.2 If we inform you that we have decided not to deal with an issue through our complaints process, we will explain this to you clearly. You have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service if you do not agree with our decision. Contact information is detailed in section:

5. Accessibility and Equality

5.1 Our principles for managing complaints at St Luke's Housing Society align with those in mandatory guidance. We strive to:

- Make it easy for our residents and service users to make complaints by providing different ways to make a complaint. Complaints can be made in person, over the telephone, in writing, by email and by appointment where residents are given the opportunity to meet at an agreed location to help them complete a complaints form.

- Make reasonable adjustments or provide additional support. We encourage you to talk these through any individual needs with a member of our staff. We will identify if you have any individual needs or vulnerabilities to tailor our services to you.

- Update you throughout the complaints process and agree with you the frequency of contact and your preferred method of contact.

- Challenge and prevent all forms of discrimination in line with the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010, making sure you experience no less favourable treatment as a direct or indirect result of who you are. We will fully investigate complaints about discrimination.

- Make out complaint policy and information available in a clear and accessible format for all our residents.

- Provide clear complaints information detailing the number of stages involved, explaining what will happen at each stage and the timeframes for responding to complaints.

- Publish and make available our complaints policy and all related complaints information on our website.

5.2 Raising a Complaint

Complaints can be reported in the following ways:

 Online – St Luke's Housing Society Website – Complaints

 Telephone – 01865 769726

 Email: complaints@saintlukeshs.uk

 Post – Flat 7 (Office) McMaster House, Latimer Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7PX



 In Person – to a member of staff in the office.

By Appointment – if you need assistance to make a complaint, you can contact us in any of the above channels and request a staff visit you or telephone you to complete a Complaint form with you.

 You can ask someone else to complain on your behalf. For example, a family member or friend, a local councillor, MP, or an advocacy service. (We will need you to share written permission with us so we can discuss your case with them to make sure we are meeting our GDPR obligations. We also accept complaints from members of the public, contractors and any other professional working with us.)

6. Contacting the Housing Ombudsman

6.1 If you would like independent advice or guidance about your complaint, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service. You can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point a complaint is being dealt with through our process.

6.2 The Housing Ombudsman cannot investigate your complaint whilst it is going through our internal complaints process, but the Ombudsman may be able to help support in reaching a resolution.

6.3 The Housing Ombudsman Service is free and impartial, providing dispute resolution for landlords and customers.

6.4 You can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service in any of the following ways:



Online: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk



Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk



Phone: 0300 111 3000 (9am - 5pm, Monday to Wednesday, 9am - 3:30pm Thursday or 9am - 5pm Friday)



Post: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

7. St Luke's Housing Society Complaints Process

Our aim is to keep our complaints process as simple as possible. In line with the Housing Ombudsman Code 2024, we have adopted a two-stage approach.

7.1 Stage 1 of our Complaint Procedure:

If our attempt to resolve your concern or service request is unsuccessful, a formal complaint will be recorded and investigated. We do everything possible to resolve your complaint as quickly as we can and work with you to agree how to put things right. When we receive a complaint, we will:

1. Listen to your concerns carefully and take them seriously.
2. Not obstruct you from making a complaint.
3. Acknowledge your report**.**
4. Agree the exact definition of your complaint together so everyone is clear about what the issues are.
5. Manage your complaint in an impartial manner with an open mind.
6. Take measures to address any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
7. Consider and investigate all evidence available carefully.
8. keep the complaint confidential as far as possible, with information only disclosed if necessary to properly investigate the matter.



Timescales Stage 1

We will acknowledge your complaint within **5 working days** of being received.
We aim to issue a full response to your complaint within **10 working days** of its acknowledgement.
We will always focus on providing you with a quality resolution and if we need additional time to achieve this, we will agree this with you and aim not to extend this by more than **10 working days**. (If this occurs, we will always provide you with details of the Ombudsman.)
We will provide you with our response to your complaint as soon as it is known. If there are outstanding actions, we will continue to track and monitor through to resolution, keeping you informed.
Our aim is to discuss our decision with you prior to providing our formal response to your complaint in writing at the completion of Stage 1. We will use clear and plain language and address all issues raised in your complaint.
Where you raise additional complaints during the Stage 1 investigation, these will be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been issued.
Where the stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues will be logged as a new complaint.

Our formal response will include:

- Confirmation of conclusion of **Stage 1** of our complaints process
- An overview of your complaint
- Our decision
- The reasons for the decisions we have made.
- Details of any compensation offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions.
- An explanation of how to escalate the matter to **Stage 2** if you are not satisfied with our response.

7.2 Stage 2 of our Complaint Procedure

If at the conclusion of the Stage 1 complaint process, you remain dissatisfied with our response to all or some of your complaint then you can escalate your complaint to Stage 2 of our process where a different member of staff will consider your complaint.
Whilst you are not required to explain your reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration, we will make reasonable efforts to understand why you remain unhappy as part of your stage 2 response.
Requests for escalation to Stage 2 must be received within **20 working days** of receiving the Stage 1 response but individual circumstances will be considered if a request to escalate is received outside of this timescale.

When a request to escalate a complaint to Stage 2 is made, we will acknowledge, define, confirm your desired outcomes, and log your complaint within 5 working days of your request to escalate being received.
We aim to issue a full and final response to your Stage 2 complaint within **20 working days of its acknowledgement.**
We will always focus on providing you with a quality resolution and if we need additional time to achieve this, we will agree this with you and aim not to extend this by more than **20 working days.**
When this occurs, we will always provide you with details of the Ombudsman.
We will provide you with our response to your complaint as soon as it is known and if there are outstanding actions we will continue to track and monitor through to resolution and keep you informed.

Our aim is to discuss our decision with you prior to providing our formal response to your complaint in writing at the completion of Stage 2 and we will also make sure that we use clear and plain language, and we address all points raised in your complaint.

- Our formal response will include:
- Confirmation of conclusion of Stage 2 of our complaints process
- An overview of your complaint
- Our decision
- The reasons for the decisions we have made.
- Details of any compensation offered to put things right.
- Details of any outstanding actions.
- An explanation of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with our final response.



Timescales Stage 2

Requests for escalation to Stage 2 must be received within **20 working days** of receiving the Stage 1 response (individual circumstances will be considered if a request to escalate is received outside of this timescale.)
We will acknowledge your Stage 2 complaint within **5 working days** of being received.
We aim to issue a full response to your complaint within **20 working days** of its acknowledgement.
If we need longer to resolve your complaint, we will discuss this with you but will not extend more than a further **20 working days.**