

Housing Landlord Complaints Policy



Contents

1. Policy Statement	2
2. Scope	2
3. Aims and Objectives	2
4. What is a complaint?	2
5. Who Can Complain?	3
6. Making a Complaint	4
7. Recording of Complaints	4
8. Complaint Resolution	4
9. What Happens When the Complaint Has Been Reviewed?	4
10. Monitoring, Delivery and Performance	5
11. Unacceptable Behaviour When Pursuing Complaints	5
12. Legislation / Regulation	5
13. Data Protection	6
14. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	6
15. Review	6
16. Control Data and Approval History	6
Appendix 1 - Complaints Process	7
Appendix 2 - Data Protection compliance	8
Appendix 3 - Complaints Form	9

1. Policy Statement

Sefton Council is committed to providing high-quality, value for money services. Sometimes things go wrong, and we encourage feedback, including complaints, as a means to correcting failures in performance and improving services.

We try to resolve expressions of dissatisfaction at the first point of contact, avoiding the need to enter into the formal complaints process. At all stages of the complaints process efforts will be made to deal with the matter as quickly as possible.

Complaints will be handled in accordance with the complaints process set out in Appendix 1. Copies of this policy will be published on our website and paper copies will be available on request.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all housing management services provided by a housing management agent through Sefton Council's landlord function as a registered provider of social housing.

The approach detailed in this policy aligns to the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code April 2024 which sets out the requirements of complaints handling for landlords of homes.

3. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to:

- Ensure that complaints are dealt with in a timely, consistent, fair and impartial manner.
- Achieve successful outcomes to complaints that are agreed by all parties.
- Learn from mistakes using the information gained from complaints to help shape services and improve performance.

4. What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction however made about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents.

Complaints can include the following: (this list is not exhaustive)

- Failure to provide a service at the standard expected.
- Delay in answering a query or responding to a request.

- Poor customer service from a staff member, appointed management agent or contractor delivering services.
- Failure to fulfil statutory or contractual responsibilities.
- Failure to follow agreed policies or procedures.
- Malice, bias, inequity, or discrimination.

The following list shows some examples that are not covered by this policy.

- Issues that involve ongoing legal action or a service failure that happened more than 12 months ago.
- Requests for a service for example, the first report of a repair.
- Complaints about services not provided by the Council under its landlord function for example, refuse collection and street cleansing. The Council has a corporate complaints policy in place which is available on the Council's website.
- Complaints about policies adopted by the Council where they are driven by law, the government or regulatory direction.
- Complaints that have already been dealt with through the Council's formal complaints process.
- Complaints about neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB). This is dealt with under a separate policy. However, it can become a complaint when it is a failure on the part of the Council's service or the way in which the case has been handled.

5. Who Can Complain?

A complaint can be made by anyone who is receiving, seeking or impacted by a service from the Council through its landlord function. All housing management services are delivered on the Council's behalf through an appointed housing management agent.

A representative may make a complaint or deal with a complaint on someone's behalf if they have their consent. See consent form at Appendix 2.

Complainants will also have the opportunity to be accompanied at any meeting with the Council or its appointed housing management agent, where this is reasonable.

Please note: We will act on anonymous complaints, but by their nature we are unable to respond. Anonymous complaints will be included in relevant Council reports.

6. Making a Complaint

A complaint can be made using any of the contact methods provided by the appointed housing management agent. However, to enable the housing management agent to track and monitor complaints effectively, the preferred method to report a complaint is via the complaints form at Appendix 3.

It would be extremely helpful if complaints could be to-the-point and focused on the key cause(s) of dissatisfaction. If you feel it would be helpful, photos can also be included.

Complaints received through social media will be acknowledged and dealt with in line with this policy. However, to ensure confidentiality and privacy is maintained, communications in relation to the complaint will not be conducted in the public domain.

7. Recording of Complaints

On the working day a complaint is received, the relevant information relating to the complaint will be recorded. All relevant details and correspondence will be stored centrally as a formal complaint case.

8. Complaint Resolution

Complainants will be asked what they would like us to do to put things right and to resolve their complaint from the earliest stage of contact.

Measures to resolve a complaint may include an apology, completion of a service, amendment to a policy, colleague training, a goodwill gesture or re-imburement of financial losses, will be considered.

9. What Happens When the Complaint Has Been Reviewed?

Complainants will be provided with a written explanation of any decision reached through the complaints process. This will include any action it has taken to improve services going forward.

If the complainant is unhappy with the response received, they can appeal the decision. Appeals will be handled in line with the process at Appendix 1.

If the complainant is still dissatisfied following a final appeal or the way in which it is being handled, the complainant can formally complain to the Housing Ombudsman. However, if the complainant is dissatisfied with the way the complaint is handled or the time taken to respond, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman for support before the final stage has been completed.

The complainant should be given the following contact details for the Ombudsman:

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 1484

Unit D

Preston

PR2 0ET

Telephone: 0300 111 3000 Fax: 020 7831 1942

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Website: [Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](http://Housing Ombudsman Service (housing-ombudsman.org.uk))

10. Monitoring, Delivery and Performance

Details of all complaints will be reported to the Council's Housing Advisory Board quarterly.

Satisfaction surveys will be carried out once complaints are closed and outcomes / lessons learned will be monitored and reported to the Board.

The Council will use lessons learnt from complaints to contribute to service improvements. To achieve this, it will ensure that learning is recorded, shared and published where appropriate. The Council and its housing management agent will also work Tenants to feed into service improvement proposals.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Highways who is also a member of the Council's Housing Advisory Board is the Council's Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC) appointed to have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture.

11. Unacceptable Behaviour When Pursuing Complaints

Unacceptable behaviour from complainants and/or their representatives when pursuing complaints will be dealt with the tenancy agreement.

12. Legislation / Regulation

Sefton Council is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing and is a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

We will carry out an annual assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code. This will be available to view on our website.

13. Data Protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requires compliance with principles for processing personal data, including protecting against unauthorised access of personal data. Personal data that is inappropriately accessed or disclosed may constitute a data breach. The GDPR requires organisations to keep a record of all data breaches and, where the breach is likely to result in a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, the organisation must notify the ICO within 72 hours of becoming aware of the breach. If the data breach results in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, those individuals must be notified without undue delay.

14. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

In implementing this policy, we aim to treat all people fairly. Where customers have specific needs or require additional support, we will make every effort to accommodate them and to provide a service that is open and inclusive.

A Full Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in October 2024 and found to have a neutral/negligible impact on those with protected characteristics. The Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review timescales set out in Section 15.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed in November 2026 then every 3 years. The policy will be reviewed sooner if there are changes to Legislation or other related Council policies.

16. Control Data and Approval History

Policy Owner:	Director of Place (Regeneration, Economy and Assets)
Next Review Date:	November 2026

Date	Version Number	Key Changes	Approver
02/12/2024	1.0	New policy	Cabinet Member Housing and Highways

Appendix 1 - Complaints Process

Stage 1

All complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and assigned to the appropriate person.

It is our intention to respond to complaints within 10 working days. However, where the complaint is due to contractor performance, we will need to engage the contractor in the resolution of the complaint and the timescale will be extended to 15 working days.

In some cases, we may need more time to fully investigate, we will let you know if this is the case and keep you updated throughout.

A decision will be made as to whether the complaint has been upheld following stage 1 investigation.

Stage 2

If a complainant is not satisfied with the stage 1 outcome, they may submit an appeal in writing or via email to complaints@crosby-ha.org.uk. This appeal should be made within 20 working days of the date of the decision.

All stage 2 complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and assigned to the appropriate person.

The association will determine the outcome of the appeal within 15 working days of receipt.

Where more time may be needed to further investigate, we will let you know this is the case and keep you updated throughout.

End of Council and Housing Management Agent process

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the appeal/stage 2 decision, they will be advised to seek advice from:

- A designated person
- The Citizens Advice Bureau
- The Housing Ombudsman

Appendix 2 - Data Protection compliance

Form of Authority to Disclose Personal Information.

I (insert name) _____

of (insert full address) _____

Hereby authorise _____ (the named person)

to represent me and act on my behalf in relation to my complaint with Crosby Housing Association. The named person agrees to provide identification details required in accordance with the Tenants Privacy Policy (where necessary).

I authorise Crosby Housing Association to communicate with the named person and provide whatever information he/she may require

Signed _____

Dated _____

Appendix 3 - Complaints Form

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title_____Forename/s_____Surname_____

Address_____

_____Postcode_____

Contact number_____

Email address_____

Please select preferred method of contact: Telephone ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐

Are you (please tick as appropriate):

A Sefton Council tenant ☐ An applicant for re-housing ☐ Other ☐

COMPLAINT DETAILS

Please state the nature of your complaint & include dates / times if appropriate:

(Please be to the point and focus on the key cause(s) of dissatisfaction)

Have you previously reported this matter to a member

Please select: Yes ☐ No ☐

Please provide details:

If we need further information, when would be best to contact you?

What would you like us to do to put things right and resolve your complaint?

Please select: Monday – AM ☐ PM ☐ Tuesday – AM ☐ PM ☐

Wednesday – AM ☐ PM ☐ Thursday – AM ☐ PM ☐

Friday – AM ☐ PM ☐

DECLARATION

The details provided in this document are a true reflection.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return this form to:

HR & Governance Manager

Crosby Housing Association, 10 Church Road, Waterloo, L22 5NB

Tel: 0151 920 7300

Email: complaints@crosby-ha.org.uk

For office use only

Date received: _____ Date acknowledged: _____ Staff Member: _____

