

COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ABOUT OUR SERVICES

We are always keen to find ways of improving the services we give. Your comments and complaints can help us put things right if they go wrong. They also help us understand what we should do differently to improve our services in the future.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about any aspect of our services including how we have handled a case. We want to be clear about the standards we aim for, so that you can tell us if we have met them or not. Each area of our business has its own standards. The standards of the *dispute resolution team* and our other services are available on our website (www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk) and by request from our office.

When can I complain?

If you think we have got something wrong please tell us as soon as possible so we can try to put it right. You can complain to us at any time but must do so within 3 months of the issue complained about or the final decision in a case. If we are still dealing with the case we may ask you to wait until we finish so that we can consider your complaint about us more effectively.

Can I complain about the decision in a case?

If you are not happy with a formal decision made during our dispute resolution process, you can ask us for a review. We use our dispute resolution process – not our complaints process – to review decisions. A review marks the end of the dispute resolution process and it is not possible to take the matter further with us.

If you don't know whether your concern is a complaint about how we have provided the service, about how we have handled your case, or about a decision, contact us anyway. We'll let you know which process we'll follow and why.

Sometimes complaints about our services are closely linked to complaints about decisions – in those cases we may deal with the different types of complaint together.

How do I complain?

Stage One complaint

You can complain by telephone, e-mail or letter. We'll see if we can do anything there and then to address your concerns. If we can't, we'll pass your complaint to someone who can deal with it. That will usually be the manager of the person you have been dealing with. We'll acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days. We'll consider your complaint and give you a response within 3 weeks.

What should I do if the problem I raised about HOS has not been resolved?

Stage Two complaint

If you think that our response to your complaint hasn't resolved the problem, you can write to tell us why. Your complaint will be considered again by someone who has not been involved in either your complaint about our services or a review of a dispute resolution decision. Depending on the nature of the complaint, that will usually be a casework manager or another senior official. We'll acknowledge your stage two complaint within 3 working days. We'll consider your stage two complaint and give you a response within 3 weeks.

The decision at this stage is the end of our internal complaints procedure.