

## *Guide to making a complaint to a landlord and to the Housing Ombudsman Service*

**You must always complain to the landlord before approaching the Housing Ombudsman Service.**

### ***Complaining to the landlord***

- Ask the landlord for details on how to make a complaint (e.g. a copy of the landlord's complaints procedure or leaflet).
- Visit or telephone the landlord's office to say that you wish to complain. However, you should then also write to your landlord. If you prefer to discuss things over the telephone, always make a note of the date and the time of the call as well as who you spoke to and what was agreed.
- If the landlord telephones you, ask them to confirm their response in writing. Always make a note of the date and the time of the call as well as who you spoke to and what was agreed.
- Make sure you write to the right member of staff at the right address. If you do not know who to write to, write to the Chief Executive at their Head Office asking them to pass it on to the right person.
- Make it clear at the beginning of your letter that you are making a complaint. Write clearly what your complaint is about and what you would like your landlord to do to put things right.
- Keep your complaint as simple and as short as you can (no longer than two sides of A4 paper). It is easier for the landlord to give you a proper response if your letter is short.
- Keep copies of all letters that you send to and receive from the landlord.
- Do not send anybody the original documents that you are using to support your complaint. Send copies.
- If you are not happy with the response you receive, write to the person at the next stage of the complaints procedure, stating again what your complaint is about, why you are not happy with the response received and what you would like them to consider now.

- If you do not know who to write to at the next stage, send your letter to the person previously dealing with the complaint and ask them to pass it to the next stage of the complaint procedure.

### **Tips**

- ✓ Follow each stage of your landlord's complaint procedure.
- ✓ Give at least 3 weeks for a response from your landlord if their procedure does not specify a time limit.
- ✓ If you do not receive a response within 3 weeks, write to the landlord asking for an urgent response. If you still do not receive a response after a further 2 weeks, write to the Housing Ombudsman Service, enclosing copies of all the relevant correspondence.

### **Complaining to the Ombudsman**

Once you have gone through ALL the stages of the landlord's complaints procedure, and if you are still not satisfied, you can bring your case to the Ombudsman.

Remember to

- ✓ read the Ombudsman's leaflet which is available from the landlord or the Ombudsman's office;
- ✓ complete the form at the back of the Ombudsman's leaflet and send it to the Ombudsman's office;
- ✓ enclose a copy of the letter with the landlord's final decision (this is usually a response at the last stage of the procedure);
- ✓ state what your complaint is about, why you are not happy with your landlord's decision & what you want them to do.



Norman House, 105-109 Strand, London WC2R 0AA

Telephone: 020 7836 3630 Fax: 020 7836 3900 Lo-call: 0845 7125 973 Minicom: 020 7240 6776

Email: [ombudsman@ihos.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ihos.org.uk) Website: [www.ihos.org.uk](http://www.ihos.org.uk)