



WGHC

Our tenants are paramount in everything we do

COMPLAINTS HANDLING FOR TENANTS

This policy was approved by the Committee of Management on Wednesday 17th July 2024. It should be reviewed again no later than June 2027 or earlier if further or new guidance from the SPSO is released.

The policy has been assessed through the organisational impact assessment process.

We can, if requested, produce this document in different formats such as larger print or audio-format. We can also translate the document into various languages, as appropriate.

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR STANDARDS

STANDARD 1

The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

STANDARD 2

The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. Its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

STANDARD 3

The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.

STANDARD 4

The Governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

STANDARD 5

The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

STANDARD 6

The Governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

WEST GRANTON HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED
26 Granton Mill Crescent Edinburgh EH4 4UT
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West Granton Housing Co-operative Limited is a fully mutual housing co-operative registered as a social landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator (HAC 225); and is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (2357 RS).



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Foreword by our CEO

This Complaint handling procedure reflects West Granton Housing Co-operative's commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve Tenant dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of Tenant complaints so that, where appropriate, we can make evidence-based decisions on the facts of the case.

The Complaint handling procedure aims to help us **'get it right first time'**. We want quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with local, early responses by capable, well-trained staff. All staff across West Granton Housing Co-operative must cover this procedure as part of their induction and must be given refresher training as required, to ensure they are confident in identifying complaints, empowered to resolve simple complaints on the spot, and familiar with how to apply this procedure (including recording complaints).

Complaints give us valuable information we can use to improve service provision and Tenant satisfaction. Our Complaint handling procedure will enable us to address a Tenant's dissatisfaction and may help us prevent the same problem from happening again. For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of the Tenants' views and experience and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. Handled well, complaints can give our Tenants a form of redress when things go wrong and can also help us continuously improve our services.

The Complaint handling procedure will help us do our job better, improve relationships with our Tenants and enhance public perception of West Granton Housing Co-operative. It will help us keep the user at the heart of the process, while enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints.



Larke Adger
Chief Executive Officer
West Granton Housing Co-operative Ltd

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MCHP PART 5

1.0 Introduction

West Granton Housing Co-operative is committed to providing high-quality Tenant services.

1.1 We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

1.2 What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

1.3 What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- ❖ failure or refusal to provide a service
- ❖ inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- ❖ delays in responding to enquiries or requests
- ❖ unfairness, bias or prejudice in service delivery
- ❖ lack of provision, or the provision of misleading, unsuitable or incorrect advice or information
- ❖ a repair that has not been carried out properly or in an agreed timeframe
- ❖ dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual
- ❖ failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- ❖ failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- ❖ conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (**except** where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves); or
- ❖ disagreement with a decision, (**except** where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).

Your complaint may involve more than one service or organisation or be about someone working on our behalf.

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1.4 What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaint handling procedure. These include:

- ❖ a routine first-time request for a service
- ❖ a request for compensation only
- ❖ issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process)
- ❖ disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector
- ❖ a request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts
- ❖ a grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- ❖ a concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern)
- ❖ a concern about a child or an adult's safety
- ❖ an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- ❖ abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our *[Unacceptable Actions Policy or equivalent]*; or
- ❖ a concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (**except** where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

1.5 Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

1.6 How do I complain?

You can complain in person at our office, by phone, in writing, by email or via our website. It is easier for us to address complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve the issue.

When complaining, please tell us:

- ❖ your full name and contact details
- ❖ as much as you can about the complaint
- ❖ what has gone wrong; and
- ❖ what outcome you are seeking.

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1.7 Our contact details

If you wish to write, our office address is: **26 Granton Mill Crescent, Edinburgh, EH4 4UT.**

If you wish to 'phone us, our office number is: **0131 551 5035.**

If you wish to email us, our generic email address is: mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk

To complain via our website, the link is: <https://www.westgrantonhousing.coop/contact-us/>

1.8 How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- ❖ the event you want to complain about; or
- ❖ finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

1.9 What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages.

2.0 The complaints handling process

Our complaint handling procedure aims to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process for resolving complaints early and locally by capable, well-trained staff.

Our complaints process provides two opportunities to resolve complaints internally:

- ❖ **frontline response, and**
- ❖ **investigation.**

2.1 STAGE 1 = Frontline response

1. We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem.

2. We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five working days or less unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3. If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- ❖ within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- ❖ within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

4. In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

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2.2 STAGE 2 = Investigation

1. Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: where the Tenant remains dissatisfied after stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage. If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at stage 1, you can ask us to handle it at stage 2 instead.

2. When using stage 2:

- ❖ we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- ❖ we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for
- ❖ we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- ❖ where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

3. If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

3.0 What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have given you our final decision, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support). You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- ❖ you have gone all the way through West Granton Housing Co-operative's complaint handling procedure
- ❖ it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about
- ❖ the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at www.spsos.org.uk/complain/form or call them on Freephone 0800 377 7330. You may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint. See the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

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(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is: FREEPOST SPSO
 Freephone: 0800 377 7330
 Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
 Website: www.spsso.org.uk

4.0 Reporting a significant performance failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systemic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure. Significant performance failures are not, therefore, dealt with through this complaint handling procedure. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website:

www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/

5.0 Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance:

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
 Tel: 0131 510 9410 Website: www.siaa.org.uk

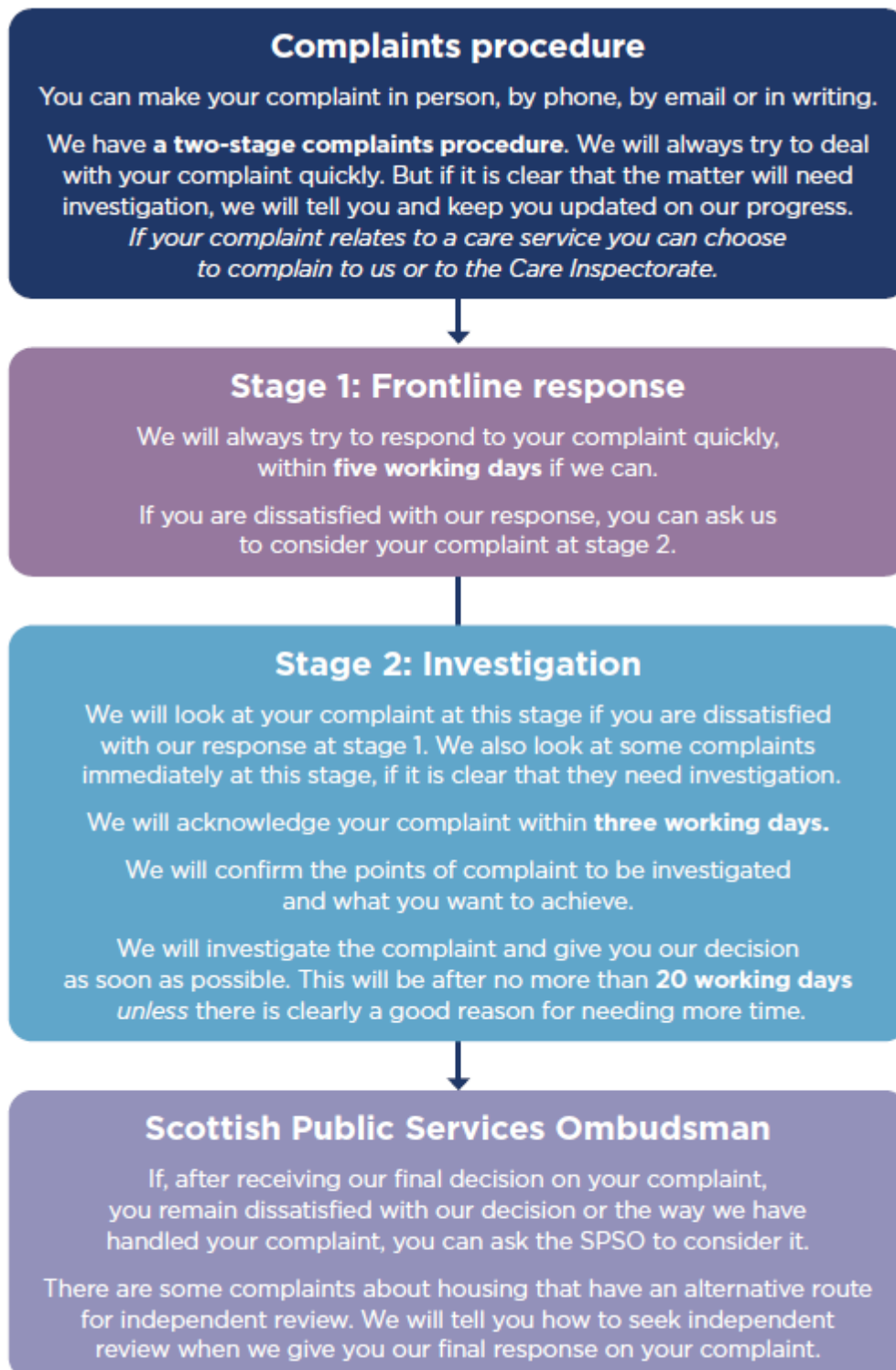
You can find out about advisers in your area through Citizens Advice Scotland:

Citizens Advice Scotland
 Website: www.cas.org.uk or check your phone book for your local citizens advice bureau.

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We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us in person, contact us on **0131 551 5035** or email us at mail@westgrantonhc.co.uk

6.0 Quick guide to our complaints procedure



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