

Housing
Ombudsman Service

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Making a complaint

Unfortunately landlords sometimes make mistakes. The complaints procedure provides a way for the landlord to put things right. Whatever has happened it is likely that you and your landlord will have to work together in the future so it's important to find a solution that you both agree to and from which any lessons can be learned for the future. This is usually best achieved by a tenant and landlord discussing and dealing with the issues together.

If you are dissatisfied with a service provided by your landlord you can make a formal complaint using its internal complaints procedure. This will vary from landlord to landlord but usually consists of at least two stages and can include a referral to a designated person (councillor, MP or tenants panel). More information on designated persons is available on our website. You can usually find your landlord's complaint form and details of its complaints procedure on its website.

Making an effective complaint will help you and the landlord to resolve matters as soon as possible after the problem arises; be clear about what went wrong and what you would like the landlord to do to put things right.

Here are some guidelines to help:

- If you are writing a letter of complaint rather than completing your landlord's complaint form address this to the chief executive OR the complaints department and make sure that you include a heading stating that the letter is a formal complaint.
- Be clear and be brief. Explain why you are unhappy with how your landlord has handled the original issue you reported and what you would like the landlord to do to put things right. We recommend that your letter or email is no longer than a side of A4 paper. More detail can always be provided later. We have included a suggested format for a complaint letter on the next page.
- Give the landlord time to respond, under its policy the landlord is expected to respond to you within a certain period of time. The complaints policy should treat people fairly. It should therefore give you some ideas as to how your complaint will be dealt with, by which type of staff and over what period of time.
- Keep copies of everything, including any responses you receive whether it is a letter or just a note of a phone conversation with your landlord about your complaint.

There may however be some limited situations where a landlord refuses to deal with a complaint under its complaints procedure. The landlord should provide you with a full explanation if it decides not to deal with your complaint. If this happens, or if the landlord delays in replying you may want to contact us for more information on what to do next or you can contact an advice centre or designated person.

More information on other helpful agencies is available on our website www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk.

Formal complaint letter template

Example letter

Your name

Address

Your telephone number/email

Name

Job Title

Landlord's address

DATE

Formal complaint

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

I am writing to make a formal complaint about:

- Summarise the original problem. Be as clear as you can. It is best to make it short and to the point
- Explain why you are dissatisfied (list what you think wasn't done properly when the landlord responded)
- Explain what impact this has had on you.

In my view, you should.... (explain what you think the landlord should do to put things right. For example – apologise, complete repairs, explain something more clearly).

Please confirm that you have received this complaint and when you will be able to provide a full response. I prefer to be contacted by letter/email/phone.

Yours sincerely

Remember to keep a copy of the letter