

Complaints Handling Procedure





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Introduction

We aim to deliver excellent service every time, but we know things don't always go perfectly. If something goes wrong or you're unhappy with our service, please let us know.

Complaints and feedback help us understand what's working and where we need to improve. Every comment you share is an opportunity for us to learn and make things better. We're committed to continually improving what we do so we can provide the best possible experience for you.

Our complaints handling procedure is based on the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) Statement of Complaints Handling Principles. We are committed to ensuring our process is user-focused, accessible, simple and timely, thorough, objective, seeks early

resolution, and is improvement-driven.

All staff receive regular training in complaints handling, in line with SPSO guidance, to ensure complaints are managed professionally, consistently, and in accordance with best practice.

For more information and to directly access our online feedback & complaints form, you can also scan the QR code below with your phone:





What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction with our actions, lack of actions, or the standard of service we provide. You can complain about various issues, including multiple Trust services or someone working on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

- 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).
- Disagreement with a decision (except where there is a statutory procedure or for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure.

These include:

- A routine, first-time request for a service.
- A request for compensation only.
- Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as 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 about a child or an adult's safety.
- A concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistle blowing concern).
- 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).
- 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 Disciplinary Procedure.
- 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).

Where your concern cannot be handled under this procedure, we will provide clear information and signpost you to the appropriate process or organisation to help you.

Who can make a complaint and how?



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](#) (pg 13).

If you're under 18 – how to complain (or tell us if something's not right):

Our complaints procedure is aligned with the SPSO Child Friendly Complaints Handling Principles and Process Guidance, and the UNCRC (Scotland) Act 2024.

- You can talk to us directly in person, by phone, email or on our website.
- You can make your complaint using any format that is suitable for you (drawing, video etc.), not just verbally or in writing.
- You can ask an adult you trust (a parent, carer, family member, teacher or advocate) to complain for you. We'll always listen to your voice and what you want to happen.
- We'll put your best interests first and keep what you tell us private as much as we can. Sometimes we must share information to keep you or someone else safe. We'll explain every step in simple words and agree how you'd like us to keep in touch (for example, text, phone, email).
- Need to talk now? You can also call Childline on 0800 1111 for free.
- In an emergency or if someone is in danger, call 999.

If you'd like help from an advocate, we can help you find one, or you can look up local advocacy through the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (www.siaa.org.uk).

How do I make a complaint?

You can complain in person at any of our offices or developments, by phone, in writing, email (info@trustha.org.uk), through our [website](#), or via [MyTrust](#), our online customer portal.

Edinburgh Office

12 New Mart Road
Edinburgh, EH14 1RL

Tel: 0131 444 1200

Glasgow Office

First Floor, Pavilion 5
Watermark Business Park
345 Govan Road
Glasgow, G51 2SE

Tel: 0131 444 1200

Wishaw Office

55 Kirk Road
Wishaw, ML2 7BL

Tel: 01698 377 200

Below are our office contact details:

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.
- What outcome you are seeking.

How long do I have to make a complaint?

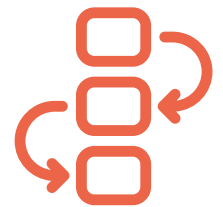


Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- 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.

What happens when I make a complaint?



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

Stage 1: Front-line Response

Whenever possible, we aim to resolve things as soon as you tell us about an issue. This might mean giving an immediate apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or taking quick action to fix the problem.

At Stage One, we'll provide an outcome within five working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you're not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, we'll explain your next steps. You can choose to take your complaint to Stage Two for a more detailed review.

You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage two 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 one response (if this is later).

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

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage Two is for complaints that need a more in-depth review. This includes situations where:

- You're still unhappy after Stage One, or
- The issue clearly requires investigation and is handled directly at this stage.

If you prefer, you can ask us to start at Stage Two instead of Stage One.

When we handle your complaint at Stage Two:

- We'll confirm we've received your complaint within three working days.
- We'll make sure we understand the issue and what outcome you're looking for.
- We'll try to resolve your complaint where possible. In some cases, we may suggest an alternative approach, such as mediation.
- If we can't resolve it quickly, we'll provide a full written response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If the investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we'll let you know, explain why, give you a revised time-scale, and keep you updated on progress.





What if I'm still dissatisfied?

Learning from complaints

We analyse complaints to identify trends and areas for improvement. Lessons learned are shared with colleagues and, where appropriate, with customers. We publish complaints performance information quarterly and resulting improvements annually on our website, demonstrating our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement.

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.

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

The SPSO

The SPSO is 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 Trust's complaints handling procedure;
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; and
- 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.spsso.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 [Getting Help to Make Your Complaint](#) (pg 13) for more information.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO

Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh, EH7 4NS

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

Their Freepost address is:

FREEPOST SPSO

(This is all you need to write on the envelope, and you don't need a stamp).



Care complaints

If your complaint relates to a care or housing support service we provide, you can choose whether to complain to us or to the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting them.

Contact details, information about their complaints procedure and about how to complain are available on their website: www.careinspectorate.com

The Care Inspectorate has several offices around Scotland. Please refer to their website for more information.

Scottish Housing Regulator (serious concerns)

If tenants believe that Trust regularly and repeatedly fails to achieve the regulatory requirements for social housing; and this failure affects a group of the social landlord tenants; they can report a serious concern to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Significant performance failures



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 complaints 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



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 on your behalf.

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:**

Tel: check your phone book for your local citizens advice bureau.

Website: www.cas.org.uk

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 444 1200** or email us at **info@trustha.org.uk**



Our contact details

Please contact us by the following means:

In writing: Trust Housing Association
12 New Mart Road
Edinburgh, EH14 1RL

Email: info@trustha.org.uk

Tel: 0131 444 1200

Website: www.trustha.org.uk

In person: at any of our offices or developments (for more information, visit our website or our contact page [here](#)).

We can use our Happy to Translate tool kit or arrange translation services if you need help with interpretation.

We can also provide interpretation and/or translation services if you are a British Sign Language user. BSL users can also contact us via www.contactscotland-bsl.org which is a free public service.

Our website also has a text-to-speech function available.

We can provide this document to you in other formats, including Braille, print and audio.

Our staff are trained to support you through the complaints process. If you are having any trouble with any stage, please let us know.



Complaints Procedure: Quick Guide



Complaints Procedure

The easiest way to make your complaint is via our website, in your MyTrust portal (www.trustha.org.uk/mytrust). You can also make a complaint in person, by phone, by email, or in writing (see page 5 for details).

We have a two-stage complaints procedure and will always try to deal with your complaint quickly, however, if it is clear that the matter will need investigation, we will keep you updated on our progress. If your complaint relates to a care service, you can choose to complain to us or the Care Inspectorate (www.careinspectorate.com).

Stage 1: Frontline Response

We will always try to respond to your complaint quickly, **within 5 working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.



Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response from Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they need investigation.

We will:

- acknowledge your complaint **within 3 working days**;
- confirm the points of complaint to be investigated and what you want to achieve;
- investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible.

This will be no more than 20 working days unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it. There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.



Contact Us

(Head Office)
Trust Housing Association
12 New Mart Road
Edinburgh, EH14 1RL

info@trustha.org.uk
0131 444 1200

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If you would like this information in a different format or language, please get in touch.

trustha.org.uk

