



Scottish Charity No. SC025647

**Fife Housing Association Ltd**

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

**Issue No: 13**  
**First Approved: January 1997**  
**Last Reviewed: June 2010**  
**Date of Next Review: June 2011**  
**Review Requirement: Annually**

This document can also be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For information, please contact Corporate Services Department on 01383 606162 or email [info@fifeha.org.uk](mailto:info@fifeha.org.uk)

這份文件亦可以以錄音帶、盲人凸點字、大字體印刷及各種社區語言等型式提供。如需要有關資料請致電 01383 606162 或透過電郵 [info@fifeha.org.uk](mailto:info@fifeha.org.uk) 與“團體服務部門” Corporate Service Department 聯絡。

يمكن توفير هذه الوثيقة مسجلة على أشرطة صوتية و مدونة بلغة بريل للعمي و طباعة كبيرة الحجم و بلغات مختلفة. للحصول على المزيد من المعلومات نرجو الإتصال بقسم خدمات البلدية على رقم الهاتف:

01383 606162

أو بإرسال رسالة إلكترونية إلى: [Info@fifeha.org.uk](mailto:Info@fifeha.org.uk)

Ten dokument może być dostępny na taśmie audio, w języku Braille'a, dużym drukiem lub w różnych językach narodowych. Aby uzyskać więcej informacji, prosimy skontaktować się z Corporate Services Department (pol. Wydział Usług Korporacyjnych), dzwoniąc pod numer telefonu 01383 606162 lub pod adresem e-mail [info@fifeha.org.uk](mailto:info@fifeha.org.uk)

یہ دستاویز ٹیپ، بریل (ناہینا افراد کیلئے پڑھنے کا طریقہ) بڑی لکھائی اور کیوٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبانوں میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہے۔  
برائے مہربانی مزید معلومات کے لئے کارپوریٹ سروسز ڈیپارٹمنٹ سے اس نمبر 01383 606 162 یا ای میل [info@fifeha.org.uk](mailto:info@fifeha.org.uk) کے ذریعے رابطہ کریں۔

## **1.0 Why have a complaints policy?**

- 1.1 Fife Housing Association aims to provide a first class service but there may be occasions when our tenants and customers are not satisfied with the service we have provided or failed to provide. If this is the case, it is important that we listen to them.
- 1.2 The aim of this complaints policy is to give guidance regarding the steps which staff and the complainant can take to get things put right where a problem occurs.
- 1.3 The complaints policy also gives Fife Housing Association the opportunity to monitor the quality of service we provide so that we can continually work towards improving it.

## **2.0 Who can use the complaints policy?**

- 2.1 Any aggrieved member of the public can use the Complaints Policy.
- 2.2 The Policy is also open to authorised representatives acting on the complainant's instruction, such as a councillor, Member of Parliament, Member of Scottish Parliament, advice agency, advocate or solicitor. Complainants are encouraged however to try to sort things out with Fife Housing Association first.
- 2.3 Tenants who are members of a formal grouping or association of tenants and would prefer to ask them to help them on their behalf can do so. (Fife Housing Association can provide contact details if required).

## **3.0 What is a Complaint?**

- 3.1 We believe that a complaint is made when a customer tells us that they are unhappy with any aspect of the services we have provided or failed to provide.
- 3.2 Complaints can be about any aspect of our service e.g.:
  - if a repair has not been carried out properly/in good time;
  - if information asked for has not been received;
  - if a member of staff, a Board Member or one of our Contractors has not behaved reasonably;
  - if customers feel they have not been treated fairly.
- 3.3 Complaints regarding neighbours will be dealt with under Fife Housing Association's neighbours disputes procedure but if a tenant has a complaint about the way Fife has dealt with a neighbour dispute, then they can use the Complaints Policy.

3.4 Although Fife Housing Association will deal with complaints sympathetically, there may be occasions when we will not be able to provide the complainant with specific information. It would be wrong, for example, for us to discuss with complainants the details of someone else's housing application, as this would be a breach of confidentiality, but we can of course talk to them about how our allocations procedure works.

#### **4.0 What is not covered by this Policy?**

4.1 There are certain specialised areas which are not covered by this Policy. The initial report of a defect or repair, insurance, compensation, alleged negligence or neighbour disputes will not be considered under this Policy. Information on how to complain about these areas is available on request.

4.2 Whistleblowing will be dealt with under the Association's Whistleblowing Policy.

#### **5.0 Making a Complaint - Informally**

5.1 Complaints can be dealt with quicker and easier if they are made early and in an informal manner in the first instance. Complainants are encouraged to speak as soon as possible to a member of the Association's staff who will do their utmost to help. Where a complainant approaches a Board member, he/she should refer the complainant to the appropriate head of service. Complaints about past events become more difficult to resolve as time passes. Hence complaints about events more than 1 year earlier will not normally be accepted.

5.2 Complainants will be told how long it may take for the problem to be sorted out and a solution reached.

5.3 If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, or any explanation we give or action we take, they will be given the opportunity to speak to a senior member of staff. He/she will investigate and inform the complainant in writing of the outcome and action taken within 14 days.

#### **6.0 Making a Complaint - Formally**

6.1 Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their informal complaint may make a formal complaint by requesting a Complaints Form from any member of staff. The form encourages complainants to tell us what they want the Association to do to resolve the problem. Where a complainant approaches a Board member, he/she should refer the complainant to the appropriate head of service.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt of the completed form. Applicants who would find it difficult to make or

progress a complaint for whatever reason should contact the Corporate Services Director at 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline for assistance with the complaints process. A member of staff can help complete the form if required.

- 6.2 Following a thorough and impartial investigation a response will normally be provided within 28 days.
- 6.3 The complainant will be kept advised of any delay in the progress of the investigation. If it is anticipated that the investigation will exceed 28 days then the complainant will be advised of any revised response date.
- 6.4 Exceptional circumstances may require complainants to refer their complaint direct to the Chief Executive e.g.:
  - a. If the complainant decides this is the route he/she wishes to take;
  - b. If the matter can only be investigated by the most Senior Officer;
  - c. If the complaint is against a staff member.

## **7.0 Right of Appeal**

- 7.1 In the event that complainants are not satisfied, the right to appeal against the outcome of their formal complaint may be made in writing to the Chief Executive requesting that the matter be referred to the Association's Management Board. They can ask to address the Board meeting (and also request to be accompanied by a friend/advisor or representative) if they wish.
- 7.2 A briefing note will be prepared to allow the Board of Management to consider the complaint. A copy of this briefing note will be sent to the complainant prior to it being issued to Board members. The complainant will be given 5 working days to comment on the information contained in the briefing note.
- 7.3 The Association will write to the complainant within 3 working days of the meeting to let them know any decision.

## **8.0 Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

- 8.1 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman investigates complaints against registered social landlords (as well as other organisations). This is a free and impartial service, and a leaflet about it is available from our office.
- 8.2 The Ombudsman will investigate complaints from any member of the public who considers they have experienced personal injustice as a result of maladministration. The complaint can be made by the aggrieved person or by a representative who is authorised in writing by the person to complain on their behalf.

- 8.3 Complainants have twelve months in which to submit their complaint to the Ombudsman (i.e within a year from when it happened or from when the complainant found out about the matter).
- 8.4 Complainants should go through the Association's own complaints procedure before the Ombudsman will deal with their complaint.
- 8.5 If the Ombudsman undertakes a full investigation of the complaint the Final Report (which includes the Ombudsman findings and recommendations) will be laid before the Scottish Parliament (copied to the Complainant and Association). Fife Housing Association will then have a duty to publicise this report.
- 8.6 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is based at 4 Melville Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7NS - Telephone 0800 377 7330 Fax 0800 377 7331. Their website can be found at [spsso.org.uk](http://spsso.org.uk). The Ombudsman can also be posted at the freepost address: SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh, EH3 OBR.

## **9.0 Confidentiality**

- 9.1 The Association will as far as possible respect the confidentiality of complaints. When we investigate a complaint, names will not be divulged any more than is absolutely necessary within the Association and if the complaint goes to the Chairperson then other Board Members will not be told who has complained. If the complaint is in relation to the Chairperson or an individual Board member then these individuals will not be involved in the dealing with the complaint.
- 9.2 If the complaint involves another tenant, staff/board member or contractor it could be difficult for the Association to look into this without talking to those involved. Where possible we aim to respect the complainant's wishes, but this may affect our ability to take any positive action to tackle the problem.
- 9.3 It will not normally be possible for us to deal with anonymous complaints. Staff will use their judgement however and examine the nature of the complaint and record any action taken.

## **10.0 Recording and monitoring complaints**

- 10.1 All formal complaints made to the Association are recorded and reported to the Chief Executive who will regularly advise the Board of changes or improvements the Association may wish to make as a result of complaints received.
- 10.2 In order to find out if customers are satisfied with our Formal Complaints Policy and also the way their complaint was handled, the Association will randomly select a proportion of all complaints received each year. The selected customers will be sent a satisfaction

questionnaire to complete. The results of these questionnaires may then be used to refine and improve the Association's procedure for Formal Complaints.

## **11.0 Publicity**

11.1 The Association will aim to publicise this Policy as widely as possible. The Policy will be:

- publicised on our website
- the subject of newsletter articles
- included in sign-up packs for new tenants
- summarised in the Tenants Handbook
- displayed at reception
- available on request
- distributed to FFOTRA, SPSO etc.

## **12.0 Access to Complaints Policy**

12.1 If a complainant requires a copy of this Policy in a different language or format e.g. large print – the Association will arrange this on request.

12.2 If a complainant requires the aid of a translator or interpreter to lodge and progress the complaint the Association will arrange this on request.

## **13.0 Independent Advice**

Complainants may feel it is important to obtain independent advice before deciding whether to make a complaint or not.

Advice Agencies in Fife include:

■ Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (FFOTRA)  
38b Hunter Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1ED  
Telephone No: 01592 641968

■ Citizens Advice & Rights Fife Offices  
15 Wemyssfield, Kirkcaldy, Telephone No: 01592 412230  
Wellesley Road, Methil, Telephone No: 01333 592600  
322 High Street, Cowdenbeath, Telephone No: 01383 314510  
119 Canmore Road, Glenrothes, Telephone No: 01592 415050  
4 Abbey Park Place, Dunfermline, Telephone No: 01383 312255\*  
11 St. Catherine Street, Cupar, Telephone No: 01334 412485\*  
**\*Please note that these offices have split opening hours -  
telephone to confirm**

■ Solicitors (see Yellow Pages)

If the complaint is in relation to access to information further information and advice is available from:-

- The Scottish Information Commissioner – Telephone No. 01334 464610 [www.itspublicknoweldge.info](http://www.itspublicknoweldge.info)
- The Information Commissioner (Data Protection) – Telephone No. 0131 225 6341 [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).