



Retirement  
SECURITY

# COMPLAINTS POLICY

## INFORMATION SHEET

It is our intention that Owners and customers should receive the best possible service from all Courts, and their compliments, comments and suggestions are always welcome. All forms of feedback, positive or negative, are treated seriously, reviewed and used to promote continuous improvement in our services. If an Owner or their representative complains about something we have done or failed to do, we will address this and respond appropriately.

We hope that in most cases the problem or complaint can be resolved directly with the member of staff providing the service. If the Owner is not satisfied that the matter has been resolved, they can take things further by utilising our Complaints Policy.

### DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

The definition of a complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an Owner or group of Owners.

An Owner does not have to use the word complaint for it to be treated as such. Whenever an Owner expresses dissatisfaction, landlords must give them a choice to make a complaint. A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative must be handled in line with the Landlord's Complaints Policy.

Landlords must recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint, as set out in our Complaints Policy.

A complaint must be raised when the Owner expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. Landlords must not stop their efforts to address the service request if the Owner complains.

An expression of dissatisfaction with services made through a survey is not defined as a complaint, although the person completing the survey should be made aware of how they can pursue a complaint if they wish to. Where Landlords ask for wider feedback about their services, they also must provide details of how Owners can complain.

## COMPLAINTS POLICY

The aim of the procedure is to protect the rights of all Owners by encouraging a fair and open resolution of individual problems. It also assists in the overall improvement of service by providing information on the quality of our performance and helps identify where improvements can be made.

A service request is a request from an Owner to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. A complaint should be raised when the Owner raises dissatisfaction with the response to their service request.

We will deal with written complaints and provide an initial response in writing as soon as possible. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will co-operate with an intermediary or third party acting on behalf of an Owner as we would with the Owner themselves.

Those unable to put their complaints in writing will receive assistance from the Court Manager or Services Manager to do this. In such circumstances, staff will allow the Owner the opportunity to comment on what has been recorded and obtain their formal agreement that what is written is an accurate statement of what they wish to say.

### Stage One

This is the informal stage of the complaints procedure. It applies to complaints received verbally and/or in writing. Where a complaint is made to any member of the Court staff, that person must try to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

If unable to do this themselves, or with the support of the Duty Manager, they must report the complaint to the Court Manager immediately.

The Court Manager will acknowledge, define and consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the Owner is vulnerable or at risk. The complaint will be logged at stage 1 of the complaints procedure within five working days of it being received. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided to the Owner.

A full response to stage 1 complaints will be given by the Court Manager within ten working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

The Court Manager must decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the Owner of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than ten working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the Owner.

When a company informs an Owner about an extension to these timescales, they must be provided with the contact details of the Property Redress Scheme.

A complaint response must be provided to the Owner when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with the appropriate updates provided to the Owner.

All points raised in the complaint will be addressed and clear reasons provided for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

Where Owners raise additional complaints during the investigation, these must be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related and the stage 1 response has not yet been issued.

Where the stage 1 response has been issued and the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues must be logged as a new complaint.

The Court Manager will confirm the following in writing to the Owner at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language:

- a. The complaint stage.
- b. The complaint definition.
- c. The decision on the complaint.
- d. The reasons for any decisions made.
- e. The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- f. Details of any outstanding actions.
- g. Details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the Owner is not satisfied with the response.

## Stage Two

If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the Owner's satisfaction at stage 1, it must be progressed to stage 2 of the landlord's procedure. Stage 2 is the landlord's final response. At stage 2 we will refer the complaint to:

Services Manager, Retirement Security, Unit 3, Wellesbourne Distribution Park Loxley Road Warwick CV35 9JY

The Services Manager will acknowledge, define and consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the Owner is vulnerable or at risk, and log stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.

Owners will be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. The Services Manager is expected to make reasonable efforts to understand why an Owner remains unhappy as part of their stage 2 response.

The person considering the complaint at stage 2 will not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.

The Services Manager will issue a final response to the stage 2 within twenty working days of the complaint being acknowledged.

The Services Manager will decide whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and then inform the Owner of the expected timescale for response. Any extension must be no more than twenty working days without good reason, and the reason(s) must be clearly explained to the Owner.

We will also provide the Owner with the contact details of the Property Redress Scheme when giving any extension to these timescales.

A complaint response must be provided to the Owner when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed.

Outstanding actions must still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the Owner.

All points raised in the complaint will be addressed and clear reasons for any decisions given, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

The Services Manager will confirm the following in writing to the Owner at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language:

- a. The complaint stage.
- b. The complaint definition.
- c. The decision on the complaint.
- d. The reasons for any decisions made.
- e. The details of any remedy offered to put things right.
- f. Details of any outstanding actions.
- g. Details of how to escalate the matter to the Property Redress Scheme if the Owner remains dissatisfied.

Stage 2 is the Landlord's final response and must involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.

## PUTTING THINGS RIGHT: OUR APPROACH

Where something has gone wrong, a Landlord must acknowledge this and set out the actions they have already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.

These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Re-considering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

Any remedy offered will reflect the impact on the Owner as a result of any fault identified.

The remedy offer will clearly set out what will happen, by when and in agreement with the Owner where appropriate. Any remedy proposed will be followed through to completion.

We will take account of the guidance issued by the Property Redress Scheme when deciding on appropriate remedies.

## FURTHER ACTION

If the Owner or their representative is unhappy with our final decision, or we fail to provide this by the relevant deadline, the Owner may refer the complaint to the Property Redress Scheme. We will co-operate fully with the Property Redress Scheme during any investigation and comply fully with the resulting decision, which will be binding on us.

Property Redress Scheme  
Limelight, 1st Floor, Studio 3, Elstree Way,  
Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 1JH  
Telephone: 0333 3219418  
Email: [info@propertyredress.co.uk](mailto:info@propertyredress.co.uk)

## PROPERTY REDRESS SCHEME CONTACT

### Citizens Advice Bureau

Contact your local CAB, or seek advice online at [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

### Age Concern's Housing Advice, Information and Mediation Service

AIMS Age UK England Astral House 1268  
London Road London SW16 4ER  
Telephone: 0845 600 2001 (lo-call helpline,  
open 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri)

### The Leasehold Advisory Service: LEASE

2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF  
Telephone: 020 7832 2500  
Email: [info@lease-advice.org](mailto:info@lease-advice.org)

### Association of Retirement Housing Managers

Albert Embankment 89, London, SE1 7TP  
Telephone: 020 7463 0660  
Email: [enquiries@arhm.org](mailto:enquiries@arhm.org)

### CQC Northwest

Citygate Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 4PA  
Email: [enquiries.northwest@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries.northwest@cqc.org.uk)  
Telephone: 03000 616161

## EXCLUSIONS

Landlords must accept a complaint unless there is a valid reason not to do so. If Landlords decide not to accept a complaint, they must be able to evidence their reasons. Each complaint must be considered on its own merits.

A complaints policy sets out the circumstances in which a matter will not be considered as a complaint or escalated. These circumstances must be fair and reasonable to Owners. Acceptable exclusions include:

- a. The issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over twelve months ago.
- b. Legal proceedings have started. This is defined as details of the claim, such as the claim form and particulars of the claim having been filed at Court.
- c. Matters that have previously been considered under the complaints policy.
- d. Landlords must accept complaints referred to them within twelve months of the issue occurring, or the Owner becoming aware of the issue, unless they are excluded on other grounds. Landlords must consider whether to apply discretion to accept complaints made outside this time limit where there are good reasons to do so.
- e. If a Landlord decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation must be provided to the Owner. The explanation must set out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the Property Redress Scheme. If the Property Redress Scheme does not agree that the exclusion has been fairly applied, the Property Redress Scheme may tell the Landlord to take on the complaint.

Landlords must not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they must consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.

## ACCESSIBILITY AND AWARENESS

Landlords must make it easy for Owners to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. Landlords must consist their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of Owners who may need to access the complaints process.

Owners must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff must be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person.

High volumes of complaints will not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that Owners are unable to complain.

Landlords must make their complaints policy available in a clear and accessible format for all Owners. This will detail the two stage process, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding. The policy must also be published on the Landlord's website.

## COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS FORM

We are always interested to hear your comments about services and any ideas you have for improvements. If you are pleased with the service you are provided with we would also like to hear from you.

We are required to provide clear procedures in order to ensure that anyone who wishes to complain is dealt with fairly, quickly and confidentially. Therefore, if you are unhappy with the services provided by the Court or Retirement Security, it is important that you tell us.

In the first instance please contact the people immediately concerned. The form on page 7 should be completed only if you wish to register a comment, compliment or a complaint.

Please Note: personal information given on this form will be used to monitor the quality of our service. It is collected and processed in compliance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998 and you have rights in respect of this information. (Please see our Privacy Policy published on our website). When completing the form below please give as much information as possible.

Name:	
Address:	
Details of comment, compliment or complaint (please include dates, times, names of individuals concerned), continue on a separate piece of paper if necessary:	
Has your comment, compliment or complaint previously been reported and if so when and to whom?	
Signature:	Date:

Office use only	
Received by:	Date:
Acknowledgement sent:	Date:
Recorded in Complaints Register?	Date: