

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RURAL  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# Getting it Right

How to make a complaint,  
compliment or suggestion

## WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN GET IT RIGHT

We welcome your comments, suggestions and complaints because they give us an idea of how our service is received by our customers. This helps us to learn and to improve the way we work.

We want to deliver the highest standards of service to all of our customers. However, we recognise that we do not always get it right. When our services do not live up to your expectations we want to know about it.

This leaflet explains how to:

- Make a complaint
- Make a suggestion
- Tell us when we have done something right.

## COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

It is important for us to receive feedback when we get things right, so that we can be sure that we carry on doing them.

We value your ideas and suggestions on how we can improve the way we work.

If you wish to make a suggestion, or if you would like to compliment the service you have received, you can do so using any of the following methods:-

- **Complete the form attached to this leaflet**
- **Visit our website: [www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk)**
- **Email: [enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk)**
- **Telephone: [0300 1234 009](tel:03001234009)**

Your ideas and feedback will be used to improve the service that we provide and to inform future reviews of the way we work.

We will let you know how your feedback and ideas have been taken into account.

If you are a tenant or shared owner you can also get your ideas heard by joining our Resident Involvement Board – For more information contact us on [0300 1234 009](tel:03001234009), or email [enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk)

## COMPLAINTS

We ask that you make a complaint within 6 weeks, because it is hard to investigate details if there is a time delay. Our complaint procedure is open to anyone who receives a service from us or who is affected by our decisions. This includes:-

- Tenants and shared owners
- Applicants for housing
- Neighbours of our properties
- Groups representing our customer, such as a resident group.

## WHAT IS A COMPLAINT?

It is important not to confuse complaints, enquires and service requests.

- If you contact us to see if your front door can be replaced, this is an enquiry. If we don't deal with your enquiry, it becomes a complaint.
- If you report a fault with your front door, this is a service request. However, if the repair is not carried out in the time that we say, it becomes a complaint.

## WHEN TO MAKE A COMPLAINT?

You should make a complaint if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, or if you feel that ourselves or our contractors have done any of the following:

- offered a poor standard of service
- failed to do something we should have done
- acted too slowly
- done something wrong
- treated you unfairly
- treated you discourteously.

You can also use our complaints procedure if you wish to appeal against a decision made by us.

Even if you do not wish to make a formal complaint, please let us know if we have made a mistake or not lived up to your expectations. We welcome your feedback, and can learn from it to improve what we do.

Please bring matters to our attention promptly – we will not normally deal with complaints that are reported to us more than 4 months after the event as these are hard for us to investigate fairly.

If a complaint is considered to be of a vexatious or unreasonable manner, we may choose to deal with it differently or we may refuse to deal with the complaint completely. If this is the case, we will provide you with our reasons for defining the complaint as vexatious, and provide you with the criteria that determine whether a complaint is vexatious.

## WHAT WE WILL DO WHEN WE RECEIVE A COMPLAINT

- Listen to the points you make and try to understand the issue
- Welcome your feedback
- Be polite
- Take your complaint seriously
- Not interrupt or defend the points being made
- Investigate it thoroughly
- Be constructive
- Ask you how you would like us to put things right
- Give clear information on what will happen next and not make promises other than that the complaint will be fully investigated.

### If a complaint is upheld:

- We will give you an apology
- We will put the mistake right if we can
- We may offer compensation if this is appropriate.

### If the complaint is not upheld:

- We will explain why and what you should do if you are not happy with this outcome.

## HOW TO COMPLAIN

If you are unhappy with any aspect of our service you can let us know by:

- completing the relevant form attached to this leaflet
- writing to us
- telephoning us
- speaking to a member of staff
- emailing us
- completing the complaints form on the website.

In many cases we will be able to resolve the issue for you without the need for you to make a formal complaint.

However, if the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, then you can make a formal complaint to us.

# HOW WE DEAL WITH A FORMAL COMPLAINT

## STAGE 1

Once we have received your complaint it will be dealt with by the Complaints Co-ordinator. We will write to you within 24 hours of receipt, acknowledging that we have received your complaint and telling you the name of the person dealing with it, and the date that you will receive a full response. The target date for the final response will be 10 working days from the date that the complaint was received in the office that is dealing with the complaint.

The person will aim to investigate your complaint and send you a written response by the date given in the acknowledgement letter. If the problem is complicated and we are unable to resolve the matter within the timescale, we will write to you and inform you of this, and let you know the date by which we aim to be able to respond.

## STAGE 2

If you are still not happy, you can appeal within 20 working days of receipt of our response letter. You need to inform the Association why you are not happy with the outcome and how you want the matter to be resolved. This appeal will be referred to the Company Secretary. An appeal panel hearing will normally be convened within 20 working days and the complainant will be invited to attend if they wish to do so.

The appeal panel will consist of the Company Secretary or an Operational Manager, a Board Member and, where possible, a tenant representative. If a tenant representative is not available 2 Board Members should be present making a total Panel of 3 people. The Panel will consider the complaint and whether the action we have taken is fair and reasonable. We will write to you to confirm the decision made within 5 working days.

### STAGE 3

Stage 3 is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 which means you have the right to appeal to a designated person tier prior to the Ombudsman.

The Association does not currently have a recognised tenant panel, therefore you can refer the complaint to your local Councillor or MP of your choice. The Association will provide advice and/or information regarding this if required.

### STAGE 4

If you have followed stages 1 and 2, but not stage 3, you have to wait 8 weeks before you can proceed to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

If you have followed stages 1 to 3 of our complaints procedure and are still dissatisfied, the Housing Ombudsman Service can pursue your complaint for you. This is a free service, but only tenants, shared owners, ex occupiers and applicants can complain to the Ombudsman.

You must contact the Ombudsman within 6 months of the end of the internal stages. The Ombudsman Service will only consider the complaint if they think we have done something wrong. We will comply with the findings or recommendations the Ombudsman makes.

#### You can contact them directly:-

**The Housing Ombudsman Service**  
**Exchange Tower, Harbour Exchange Square**

**London, E14 9GE**

**Tel: 0300 111 3000**

**Fax: 020 7831 1942**

**Minicom: 020 7404 7092**

**Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

We treat all complaints and appeals in the strictest confidence. We will not give out your name if you do not want us to. If during the course of our investigation we need to give out your name, we will contact you first before we do this. We cannot deal with formal complaints if you do not give us your name.

## **COMPENSATION**

You may be entitled to compensation if we fail to meet minimum service standards or if you have experienced financial or other loss; evidence of this would need to be produced. You may also receive compensation if we consider it appropriate to resolve an official complaint.

## **SPECIAL INFORMATION**

If you require this leaflet in a larger print or a different language, please telephone 0300 1234 009.

## **HOW TO CONTACT US**

***You can contact us from Monday to Friday by telephone, from 9am to 5pm on 0300 1234 009. Email: enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk or visit our website at www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk***

## COMPENSATION GUIDELINES

Compensation will be considered:

- If there is a service failure
  - Failure of Service Promises of a small nature:-  
written apology; flowers; voucher up to the value of £30.
  - Failure of Service Promises of a serious nature:-  
decision referred to Company Secretary.
- If the resident has incurred costs due to a service failure

## REPAIRS- (REPAIRS POLICY)

- Missed appointments- £10 voucher
  - If we fail to complete the work on time (within published timescale), we will issue a second order to the contractor. If the work is still not completed, residents are entitled to claim compensation. This will be a fixed sum of £10 for not carrying out the work on time, together with £2 per day for every day that the repair remains outstanding. The maximum amount payable for any repair will be £50.
- Should the Association need to inspect the repair before ordering the works, compensation will not be payable if the surveyor has not been able to gain access to the property. Furthermore, compensation will not be payable if the approved Maintenance Contractor has not been able to gain access.

Replacement of residents' effects damaged as a result of the failure of an item which the Association has an obligation to repair , e.g. faulty plumbing causing damage to carpet:

Residents are advised to ensure that they have appropriate contents insurance in place to cover any damage to effects as a result of any such component failure, the Association expects residents to claim for damage via their own contents insurance policy.

As a gesture of goodwill the Association will offer **up to the value of £100 as a contribution** to any redecoration; cleaning of items; or residents home contents insurance excess.

A compensation form should be completed, along with evidence of costs incurred by the resident for reimbursement, in the form of an official receipt; copy of insurance claim and evidence of excess amount.

– Should the resident remain dissatisfied, the matter will be dealt with according to the Residents Complaints Procedure.

### **Temporary heating provided for total loss of heating**

Where temporary heaters are provided as part of a heating repair or replacement the Association will reimburse up to the value of £25 subject to the resident completing a compensation form and providing evidence of the additional electricity costs.

- Where claims arise as a result of a dispute regarding contractor negligence or conduct, the resident should, in the first instance, report this to the Association's Maintenance Surveyor or the Customer Care Team.
- This will then be investigated in line with the Association's Complaints Policy and Procedures. This may involve the contractor reporting the dispute to their public liability insurers, who may investigate further. If any offer of payment or compensation is made, this payment will be between the contractors, the contractor's insurers and the resident.
  - The Association will not be liable for any such claims or payments. The Association will act as an intermediary and, as such, will request and forward information to the relevant parties as necessary.
- In all cases, for a claim for reimbursement to be considered, receipts must be made available to the Association and/or the Association's insurers.



## GETTING IT RIGHT

If you are making a complaint:-

How would you like us to put the matter right?

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Have you complained about this problem before?

- **Yes**
- **No**

If yes, approximately when? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for filling in this form.

Once we have received your complaint we will look into the matter and provide you with a response.

**Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association**

**Whitwick Business Centre**

**Stenson Road, Coalville**

**Leicestershire, LE67 4JP**

**Tel: 0300 1234 009**

**Email: [enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshirerha.org.uk)**