

Our decisions make a real difference to the lives of our tenants, the people they live with and others we meet in the course of our work. Our complaints and compliments policy is designed to allow you to challenge us when we make mistakes or fail to act when we should, and to encourage you to tell us when we get things right.

We aim to handle your complaints fairly, openly and as quickly as we can.

We take special care to give equal access to our process for disabled people.

We make sure that we learn from complaints and compliments to improve our policies and the services we deliver.

Complaints covered by our policy

We define a complaint as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the association, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual tenant or group of tenants.”

However, we cannot consider your complaint if:

- it's about something that occurred more than six months ago (unless the issue is still happening)



- it's about a matter that we have already dealt with
- you are asking us to perform a service for the first time
- you are also taking us through a legal process
- you are disputing a policy decision, or your rent or service charge, when we have set it correctly, or
- it relates to a neighbour dispute or anti-social behaviour (unless your complaint is about the way we handled things).

We will write to explain if any of these apply. If you disagree, you can appeal to the Housing Ombudsman.

2 Complaints and compliments

Contact us about our service

You can thank us for good service, or make a complaint by:

- telling us in person
- writing to our office
- emailing any member of staff, or
- using our complaints email address: complaints@wfha.org.uk

If you send us a compliment, we will pass your comment to the relevant Head of Department, who will record it for our staff.

How we will handle your complaint

When we receive your complaint, we send an acknowledgement within one working day.

Informal complaints

We aim to resolve most complaints informally.

You can talk to any member of staff about your concern. They will sort it out themselves or pass it to the most appropriate member of staff to investigate.

We don't work to timescales for informal complaints, but we do respond as quickly as we can. We will keep you updated with our progress.

If you aren't happy with our response, you can take it to Stage 1.

Stage 1: Departmental heads

You can make your complaint formal in writing, in person, by email or by using the online complaints form on our website at www.wfha.org.uk

Set out the problem and send any letters, photos or other proof.

Your complaint will be looked at by the relevant Head of Department.

They will:

- send an acknowledgement
- tell you who is handling the complaint
- (if we think this will be useful), ask you to meet with us – though you can also opt to send someone else to speak for you, providing they are not a legal representative, and
- tell you when to expect a reply.

You will normally get a full written reply within 10 working days. But if your complaint is taking longer to resolve, the letter will explain why and give you a new timescale.

If you are happy with our response, we will close your complaint. But if you aren't happy, you can ask to appeal by going to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Director of department

To move to Stage 2, you should write to or email us. Explain in detail why you aren't happy with our Stage 1 response and that you wish to appeal.

We will:

- send an acknowledgement
- tell you which Director is investigating the complaint (or clearly explain why we are not willing to let you take things further)
- (if we think this will be useful), ask you to meet with us – though you can also opt to send someone else to speak for you, providing they are not a legal representative, and
- tell you when to expect a reply.

The Director will normally send a full written reply within 20 working days. But if your complaint is taking longer to resolve, they will explain why and give you a new timescale.

If you are happy with our response, we will close your complaint. But if you aren't happy, you can appeal by going to Stage 3.

Stage 3: Appeal to the Board of Management

Within 15 working days of receiving our Stage 3 response, you should write to our head office address. Mark your envelope for the attention of the Chair (Complaint), WFHA Board of Management.

In your letter, explain in detail why you aren't happy with our Chief Executive's response. Include photos and other documents if relevant.

Your appeals panel will include three Board members. They will each get an advance copy of all the paperwork and so will you.

We will contact you to arrange a hearing date, so that you can attend. We will also send a representative for WFHA. You can also choose not to attend, send someone to speak for you, or speak to a panel member.

At the hearing, the panel will record the key issues and how you would like us to respond.

They will normally send a full written reply within 20 working days. But if your complaint is taking longer to resolve, the letter will explain why and give you a new timescale.

If you are happy with the panel's response, we will close your complaint.

This is the end of WFHA's complaints procedure. However, if you aren't happy, you can still appeal to the Housing Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman Service

After receiving our final response, you have 12 months to make an appeal to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

You can do this:

- online at:
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- by email to:
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- by phoning: 0300 111 3000, or
- by writing to:
Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool L33 7WQ

You can ask a 'designated person' (usually an MP or councillor) to help you if you need this.

The Housing Ombudsman Service can also offer advice while you are completing our process.

Find out more

Phone: 020 8524 6987

Email: info@wfha.org.uk

Visit our website: www.wfha.org.uk

Write to: Waltham Forest HA
Energy Centre, 31 Church Hill
Walthamstow, London E17 3RU