

# Making a complaint



## **Crown's aims**

Crown's aim is to provide a first-class service for all our tenants and housing applicants, with high standards of responsiveness, efficiency, quality and courtesy.

However, no organisation is perfect, and there will be times when we fall below the standards we aim for, or we leave tenants dissatisfied. Where this happens, using the complaints procedure can help make sure that we rectify matters properly, and learn from our mistakes.

## **What can I complain about?**

You can make a complaint regarding any matter you feel aggrieved or unfairly treated about, or if you believe that Crown has let you down. You can use this procedure if you consider that:

- You reported a problem to us, and we either did not respond or responded too slowly.
- Our response did not address the problem you brought to our attention, or we did not achieve what we said we would do.
- We did not respond in accordance with our procedures.
- We treated you unfairly, or differently from other tenants in the same position.
- A member of staff, or a contractor employed by Crown, was unhelpful, rude or unprofessional.

## **Who can use the complaints procedure?**

Our complaints procedure is not restricted to use only by our tenants. You can use our complaints procedure if you are:

- Living in a property owned or managed by Crown.
- Applying to be housed by Crown.
- Not living in a Crown property or applying for housing, but you have a legitimate interest, for example as a neighbour.

People acting on behalf of a complainant can use this procedure to make a complaint, as long as they have their authorisation. This includes a local councillor or MP, advice agency or legal adviser.

## **How can I make a complaint?**

Crown's complaints procedure has three stages, and also includes your right to approach an independent body if you cannot resolve matters internally.

### **Stage 1: Informal complaint**

We aim to resolve as many complaints as possible informally. In most cases, we can resolve service failures most quickly and easily if you approach us informally, and we recommend that you should always try to speak to the member of staff concerned as the first step (although you can write or email if you prefer).

If you think we have failed to meet our service standards, please ring (or email or write to) the member of staff who has dealt with your original enquiry to let them know what your concern is and how we can resolve matters.

If the staff member is not available, please contact the Housing Manager for your area, who will take the matter forward.

We aim to respond to all informal complaints within a week, and we will always ring or write to you to let you know what we are doing. If it takes longer to resolve the issue, we will in any event update you within a week.

If you do not want to approach the staff member concerned (for example if your complaint is about the behaviour of the staff member), you can contact the Chief Executive, who will ask a senior member of staff unconnected with your complaint to investigate and respond to you.

Crown appreciates that some complaints, for example regarding the behaviour of a member of staff or a tenant, can require sensitive handling, and we will respect your confidentiality as much as we can. It may not be possible to investigate a complaint fully if we cannot raise it with the individuals concerned, but we will always respect your wishes regarding disclosure. We are not normally able to accept anonymous complaints.

### **Stage 2: Formal complaint**

If you have not been able to resolve your complaint informally, or there are good reasons why it's not appropriate to use the informal option, you can make a formal complaint to Crown's Chief Executive. (Complaints about the Chief Executive can be made to the Chair of the Board).

If you wish to make a formal complaint, you should do so within two weeks of receiving the response to your informal complaint.

When you make a formal complaint, it is important for you to let us know exactly what the problem is and how you would like to see it resolved, and therefore we prefer your complaint to be in writing. You can make a formal complaint by letter or email, or by using the complaint form attached to this leaflet. Alternatively, the staff member who has handled your informal complaint can advise or help you to take your complaint forward in a way which is convenient for you.

The Chief Executive will investigate your complaint personally, and may wish to speak with you directly, either by phone or by meeting.

The Chief Executive will aim to reply to your complaint in writing within two weeks but, if this is not possible, will provide an update within this time to let you know what progress has been made.

Depending on the Chief Executive's findings, the formal response may contain:

- An apology for any error, service failure or misbehaviour.
- A change to the action or decision which led to the complaint.
- A change in Crown's procedures to stop the same problem recurring.
- Appropriate compensation if a financial loss has been incurred.

All formal complaints will be logged and reported to the Board at the next board meeting.

### **Stage 3: Appeal**

If you are not satisfied with the response to your formal complaint, you can appeal to Crown's Board (all board members are non-executives).

If you wish to appeal, you should write within two weeks of receiving the response to your formal complaint to the Chair of the Board giving your reasons for the appeal.

The Chair of the Board will appoint a Panel of board members to hear your appeal, and wherever practicable, the Panel will include a tenant board member.

The Panel will convene an appeal hearing within four weeks of receiving the complaint (or within two weeks if the matter is urgent), and you will be invited to attend. You may be accompanied by a friend or advocate if you wish.

The Chair of the Panel will write to you within two weeks of the hearing to let you know the Panel's decision.

### **Stage 4: Independent investigation**

If you remain dissatisfied after all the internal stages have been completed, you can ask the Independent Housing Ombudsman to investigate your complaint. The Ombudsman service is a free and impartial service, and Crown will always comply with the Ombudsman's findings. The Ombudsman will not normally consider any complaints unless you have completed Crown's internal complaints procedure.

Alternatively, tenants living in Crown's sheltered housing schemes in Scotland (Braidbar Court and Huntly Court) can complain to the Scottish Care Commission on matters relating to the support we provide. Tenants in our sheltered housing in London (Highbury Terrace and Ronalds Rd) can complain to Islington Council regarding our support services.

Contact details within Crown and at the independent bodies are on the back page of this leaflet. Crown's staff can advise you how you can approach the independent bodies if you need help.



# Complaint Form

Please complete the form and send to:

Nick Wood, Chief Executive  
7 Cheam Court, Station Way, Cheam, Surrey SM3 8SP

Your name

Your address

Postcode

## Contact details

Home phone

Mobile phone

Email

Please describe your complaint *(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)*:

Please detail any damage, loss or inconvenience experienced:

Please say how you would like the matter to be resolved:

Signature

Date

# Complaints procedure – contact details

## Tenants in London

Anne Cross, Housing Manager

7 Cheam Court  
Station Way  
Cheam  
Surrey SM3 8SP

020 8642 2212  
anne@crow nha.org.uk

## Tenants in Scotland

Maureen Thomson, Area Manager

Westwood Business Centre  
69 Aberdalgie Rd  
Glasgow  
G34 9HJ

0141 771 4694  
maureen@crow nha.org.uk

## All tenants

Nick Wood, Chief Executive

7 Cheam Court  
Station Way  
Cheam  
Surrey SM3 8SP

020 8642 2212  
nick@crow nha.org.uk

Christine Beaumont, Chair of the Board

*(Contact by post only)*

7 Cheam Court  
Station Way  
Cheam  
Surrey SM3 8SP

## Independent bodies

Housing Ombudsman Service

81 Aldwych  
London WC2B 4HN

0300 111 3000  
info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk  
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Scottish Commission for the  
Regulation of Care

Compass House  
11 Riverside Drive  
Dundee DD1 4NY

0845 603 0890  
enquiries@carecommission.com  
www.carecommission.com

Housing & Adult Social Services

London Borough of Islington  
338-346 Goswell Rd  
London EC1V 7LQ

020 7527 8002  
supportingpeople@islington.gov.uk  
www.islington.gov.uk