**Shropshire Rural Housing Association**



**COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**



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**INTRODUCTION**

Shropshire Rural Housing Association aims to provide safe and comfortable homes, and a high quality service to all our tenants and applicants. We also recognise the importance of providing a clear and efficient process for people to complain where they believe we have fallen below our standards.

We seek to identify and deal with causes of any discontent at an early stage. However, should there be complaints, these are taken seriously and play a positive part in improving future service delivery. Complainants should not pursue issues through other channels until, and unless they have first exhausted the Association’s own complaints procedure.

**What is a complaint?**

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the Association either by a tenant, applicant or member of the public, where an initial response to their problems has not proven satisfactory.

**How to complain?**

The procedure is designed to allow complainants to choose how to complain. If a tenant, applicant or member of the public wishes to express their dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action by the Association or about the action or actions of a member of the Association’s staff, then they may do so by whatever method they choose.

The most common ways of making a complaint are:-

* By letter to

**Shropshire Rural Housing Association**

**The Maltings**

**59 Lythwood Road**

**Bayston Hill**

**Shrewsbury**

**Shropshire**

**SY3 0NA**

* By telephone on **01743 874848**
* By Text to **07885 464687**
* Via the Feedback Section on our Website: www.shropshirerural.co.uk
* In person, or by
* Email to **enquiries@shropshirerural.co.uk**

**Raising an Initial Concern**

If an individual wishes to draw a matter of concern to the attention of the Association, that some explanation of the Association’s performance or lack of it, is warranted, but they do not feel that a formal investigation is necessary then the matter should be raised with a member of the Association’s staff. To ensure the matter is dealt with swiftly, it should be raised as follows:

Initial concerns should be made to the appropriate staff member. This will usually be the staff member responsible for the relevant area of the Association’s service. E.g. The Asset Manager, Housing Officer or Sheltered Scheme Manager.

They can be made:

* In person, by telephone, in writing or by using email
* As soon as is reasonably practicable after the matter has arisen
* In as much detail as possible
* In confidence if requested.

In responding to an initial concern, the person raising the concern will be asked what they wish the Association to do to rectify the problem or improve matters. These views are extremely important if satisfaction is to be provided.

Their views will be taken into account when the matter is being investigated. The person responding to the matter will either take remedial action as soon as possible or reply in writing within fourteen days giving the reason(s) why no such action has been taken.

Such matters should normally be capable of being dealt with in a relatively short time scale and on a fairly informal basis. If the person raising the concern is unhappy with the response they may raise the issue as a formal complaint.

**First Stage Complaint**

If the outcome of an initial concern is unacceptable, or if the complaint is about the action(s) of a member of the Association’s staff, a complaint should be made to the Chief Executive at the Association’s office. Such a complaint should be:

* In as much detail as possible
* Made as soon as is reasonably practicable after the cause for complaint has arisen
* In confidence if you request this.

Again, first stage complaints can be made using any of the methods listed previously:

The complaint will be:

* Recorded in the Association’s Complaints Log.
* Drawn to the attention of the Chair of The Association and to the Chair of Housing Management Committee.
* Replied to within fourteen days be the Chief Executive

If for reasons beyond his/her control, the Chief Executive is unable to reply to the complainant within fourteen days (e.g. because he/she is away from the office for an extended period of time) then the complainant may be advised of this fact by another member of the Association’s staff who will also tell the complainant when the Chief Executive is likely to be available Should the complaint be particularly pressing, the Chair of the Association may instruct the Finance Director to reply in the Chief Executive’s absence.

Prior to replying to a first stage complaint, the Chief Executive or Finance Director may ask to discuss the complaint in person with the complainant. In any event, a complainant has the right to request a meeting with the Chief Executive or Finance Director at any stage of the complaints procedure.

If such a meeting was held then another person should attend to take minutes which should be signed by the complainant as being accurate.

Both the complaint and the response will be recorded in the Complaints Log in order that it can be used to inform future service delivery and for ongoing monitoring of complaints.

**Second Stage Complaint**

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the response from the Chief Executive/Finance Director, they may ask for the matter to be referred to the Board of the Association, via the Chair, again using any of the methods previously referred to.

The Chair will respond within fourteen days advising how the Board intends to respond to the complaint. The response will include details which may involve delegation of the complaint’s investigation to a member/panel of the Board, followed by a recommendation to the Board in respect of any required action to be taken.

The member/panel carrying out the investigation may wish to discuss the complaint with the complainant at a formal meeting.

The complainant will have the right to be accompanied or represented by another person of their choice.

Once the Complaint has been considered, including the causes of the complaint, any remedial action taken prior to this stage and any personal representations made by the complainant, a decision will be made by the Board in respect of any further action, if any, to be taken.

The Board will convey its decision to the complainant within twenty-eight days of the Second Stage Complaint being made, which will represent the Association’s final response to the matter raised, within the framework of this complaints procedure.

**The Independent Housing Ombudsman**

If a complainant remains dissatisfied with the Association’s response to the complaint after completing all these procedures he/she may refer the matter to the Independent Housing Ombudsman. (It is important that the Association’s Complaints Procedure has been exhausted before contacting the Ombudsman).

The address is:

Independent Housing Ombudsman

Norman House

105-109 The Strand

LONDON

WC2 0AA

Telephone: 020 7836 3630

An explanatory leaflet and complaint form is supplied to each tenant. Further forms are available from the Association’s office.

**Other Agencies**

Complainants are of course free to pursue complaints through Citizens Advice Bureau, Law Centres, Housing Aid Centre and similar agencies that will offer advice and support, free of charge.

Firms of Solicitors will also assist with complaints against the Association but may charge for their services.

**Complaints Monitoring**

All complaints reaching the first stage of this procedure are recorded in the Association’s Complaints log to ensure compliance with this procedure and as a record of complaints received.

Complaints are also one of the Association’s Key Performance Indicators.

**Publicising the Procedure**

This Procedure will be publicised through a number of sources including:

* The Association’s Website
* In the Association’s Tenants Handbook
* In the Association’s Offices
* In the Tenancy Sign-Up pack