

Shropshire Rural Housing Association



**SHROPSHIRE
RURAL HOUSING**
ASSOCIATION

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE



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INTRODUCTION

Shropshire Rural Housing Association aims to provide a high quality service to all its tenants and applicants. In particular, it seeks 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 or fax to
Shropshire Rural Housing Association
The Maltings
59 Lythwood Road
Bayston Hill
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY3 0NA
(fax number: 01743 874003)
- By telephone on **01743 874848**
- In person, or by
- Email to enquiries@shropshirerural.co.uk

Initial Complaint

Where you feel that you wish to draw a matter to the attention of the Association, that some explanation of the Association's performance, or lack of it, is warranted, but do not feel that a formal investigation is necessary then an initial complaint should be raised. Initial complaints should be made:-

- To the appropriate person at the Association's office
- Verbally, in person, by telephone, in writing or by using email
- As soon as is reasonably practicable after the cause for complaint has arisen
- In as much detail as possible
- In confidence if the complainant requests this.

The appropriate person in the first instance may be the Housing Officer, the Administration Officer or, in a sheltered scheme, the scheme warden. If a complainant is unsure as to who may be the appropriate person they should ask at our office either by telephone or email.

You will be asked what you wish the Association to do to rectify the problem or improve matters. These views are extremely important if satisfaction is to be provided.

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

Both the complaint and the response will be recorded on the appropriate file. Initial complaints should normally be capable of being dealt with in a relatively short time scale and on a fairly informal basis. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the initial complaint you may raise the issue as a second stage complaint.

Second Stage Complaint

If the result of an initial complaint is unacceptable to you, or if the complaint is about the action(s) of a member of the Association's staff, a further second stage 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, second stage complaints can be made:

- By letter or fax
- By telephone
- In person
- By email.

This will be:

- Recorded in a complaints book at the Association's office.
- Drawn to the attention of the Chairman of Housing Management Committee
- Replied to within fourteen days by 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 will 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.

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

Third Stage Complaint

If you remain dissatisfied with the response from the Chief Executive, you may ask for a response from the Chairman of the Housing Management Committee. Once again, such a request may be made:

- By letter or fax
- By telephone
- In person
- By email

Where the matter clearly requires a formal investigation by senior management, you will be advised within fourteen days, that the matter is being looked into and that the Chairman of the Housing Management Committee will respond within twenty-eight days.

Again, the Chairman of Housing Management may decide to discuss the complaint with the complainant in person before making his/her response and again the complainant has the right to request a meeting with the Chairman of the Housing Management during this stage of the proceedings.

If the complainant is still not satisfied then he/she may make a Final Complaint to the Chairman of the Association who will refer the matter to a Complaints Panel formed from members of the Association's Governing Body.

Final Complaint

A Final Complaint should be made to the Chairman of the Association, care of the Association's office.

The Chairman will respond within fourteen days advising the complainant of the day on which he/she proposes to convene a Complaints Panel and inviting the complainant to put their case before the panel in person.

If either the date or location proposed for the Panel is not convenient for the complainant then he/she has the right to ask for a revised date or location. In addition the complainant will have the right to be accompanied or represented by another person of their choice in putting their case to the Panel.

Once the Complaints Panel has considered the details and causes of the complaint, including such responses given and any remedial action taken prior to this stage and any personal representations made by the complainant, whether in person or not; it will decide what further action, if any, it will direct the Association to take.

The Complaints Panel will convey its decision to the complainant within twenty-eight days of its meeting. The Complaints Panel's decision 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.