

Complaints Handling Procedure

New Gorbals Housing Association is committed to providing high-quality customer services

We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This leaflet describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

Contents

Page

What is a complaint?	4
What can I complain about?	4
What can't I complain about?	5
Who can complain?	6
Complaints from or involving children	6
How do I complain?	6
How long do I have to make a complaint?	7
What happens when I have complained?	7
What if I'm still dissatisfied?	10
Complaints about factoring	12
Reporting a significant performance failure	13
Getting help to make your complaint	14
Your privacy	15
Our contact details	15
Quick guide to our complaint procedure	16

What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action (something we have done) or lack of action (something that we should have done but didn't), or about the standard of service provided by us, or by someone working on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- Failure or refusal to provide a service
- Inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- Delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- Unfairness, bias or prejudice in service delivery
- Lack of provision, or the provision of misleading, unsuitable or incorrect advice or information
- A repair that has not been carried out properly in the agreed timeframe
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on an individual
- Failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- Conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor
- Disagreement with a decision (except where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process in place).

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services, or be about someone working on our behalf.

What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- Requests for compensation
- Issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannot then be considered under this process)
- Disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process
- A request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts
- A grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- A concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a service they received, such as a whistleblowing concern)
- A concern about a child or an adult's safety (however we will signpost to a relevant agency or service)
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint, or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision at stage 2
- Abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff where such actions would be covered by our Unacceptable Actions Policy
- A concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give relevant information and advice.

Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on **'Getting help to make your complaint'**.

Complaints from, or involving children

We are committed to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman's Child Friendly Complaints Principles and will be guided by these when handling complaints from, or involving, children.

Child Friendly Complaint Principles

- For everyone under 18
- Focussed on children's best interests
- Trusting and inclusive
- Centred on children's voices
- Kind and supportive
- Private and confidential
- Knowing about rights

You can find out more about the principles on our website at <https://www.newgorbalsha.org.uk/about-us/complaints>

Or you can ask us for more information.

How do I complain?

You can complain in person at our office, by phone, in writing, by email, or through our website contact form:

www.newgorbalsha.org.uk/about-us/contact-us

When making a complaint, tell us:

- Your full name and contact details
- As much as you can about the complaint
- What has gone wrong
- What outcome you are seeking

How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of the event you want to complain about, or finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

What happens when I have complained?

We will tell you who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a response.

Our complaints procedure has two stages, there is more information about these on pages 8 and 9.

Stage one: frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem. We aim to agree a resolution to these complaints within 5 working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- Within six months of the event you want to complain about or finding out that you have a reason to complain; or
- Within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

Stage two: investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint:

- Where the customer remains dissatisfied after stage 1
- Where the complaint clearly requires investigation and consideration by a more senior member of staff.

You can ask us to escalate your complain to Stage 2.

When considering a complaint at stage 2 we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- Confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate, and what outcome you are looking for
- Try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we may suggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation)
- Where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will agree revised timescales with you and keep you updated on progress.

What if I'm still dissatisfied?

If you remain dissatisfied after we have given you our final decision, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at your complaint.

The SPSO is an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- You have gone all the way through our complaints handling procedure
- It is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about; and
- The matter has not been (or is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide them with a copy of our final response to your complaint. You can do this online at

www.spsso.org.uk/complain/form

or call them on Freephone 0800 377 7330.

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response to your complaint.

SPSO Contact details

Freepost address: FREEPOST SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Complaints about Factoring

The SPSO does not normally look at complaints about our factoring service. The Housing and Property Chamber First-tier Tribunal for Scotland will try to resolve complaints and disputes between home owners and property factors. So if your complaint is about a factoring service, and you are still dissatisfied after our investigation stage you will be able to go to the Housing and Property Chamber to request an independent review.

You can contact the Housing and Property Chamber:

In person or by post Housing and Property Chamber
First-tier Tribunal for Scotland

Glasgow Tribunals Centre
20 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8GT

Phone 0141 302 5900

Website www.housingandpropertychamber.scot

Complaints and Serious Concerns to the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them by tenants where their social landlord regularly and repeatedly fails to achieve the regulatory requirements for social housing; and this failure affects a group of social landlord tenants.

You can ask us to send you a copy of the SHR's Complaints & Serious Concerns leaflet or pick one up at our reception.

You can also find a copy on our website in the Complaints section or on the SHR's website.

SHR website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

SHR phone number: 0141 271 3810

Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable, or reluctant, to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you. We will need a written request to share certain information with your advocate, please contact us for more information on how to arrange this.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance or Citizens Advice Scotland.

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Phone 0131 510 9410

Website www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website www.cas.org.uk

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our statutory equalities duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help customers access and use our services. If you have trouble putting your complaint in writing, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font or Braille, please let us know.

Your privacy

We take your privacy seriously, and process your personal data in line with the relevant legislation. For information on how your personal data is processed and stored by us, please read our Fair Processing Notice. You can find our Fair Processing Notice along with our Privacy Policy on our website. We can also email or post this to you, or you can pick up a copy in the office.

Our contact details

Please contact us by the following means:

In person or by post	New Gorbals Housing Association 200 Crown Street Glasgow G5 9AY
Phone	0141 429 3900
Email	complaints@newgorbalsha.org.uk

Quick guide to our complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail, in writing or through our website. We have a **two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly, but if it is clear that the matter will need investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.



Stage 1: Frontline Resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2.



Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We look at some complaints immediately at this stage if it is clear that they are complex or need investigation. We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible - within **20 working days** unless there is a good reason for needing more time.



The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If you remain dissatisfied following our final decision, or are unhappy with the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it. For complaints about factoring, see the Housing and Property Chamber.