

How to Make a Complaint

This leaflet explains what to do if you are not satisfied with the service you have received from Stoke on Trent Housing Society.

We always try to do our best but understand that sometimes we don't get things right. When the level of service we've provided falls short we want you to let us know that you are dissatisfied so that we can make every effort to put it right and learn from our mistakes. Simply let us know what it is that you want to complain about by:

- ✓ **Email info@stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk**
- ✓ **Complete a General Contact Form on our website.**
- ✓ **Telephone us on 01782 968566.**
- ✓ **Visit us at The Trevor Jones Office, Hammond House, Hanley, ST1 3AX.**
- ✓ **Whatsapp us on 07876897172 or send us a message via Facebook.**
- ✓ **Speak to one of our officers as they visit your scheme.**

Should you need any help with making your complaint you can contact us, and we will support you. You can also nominate a representative to deal with your complaint on your behalf.

What happens once I make my complaint?

Once we receive your complaint our complaints process is very simple:

Stage 1	Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Within 5 working days of receiving your complaint we will write to you to acknowledge receipt. By then the person handling your complaint will already have begun to investigate.▪ As part of the investigation, you may be contacted to discuss how we can work to resolve your complaint.▪ A formal response to your complaint will be sent to you within 10 working days from the date your complaint was acknowledged.▪ The response will address all points raised in your complaint alongside clear reasons for any decision and the details of any remedy to put things right.▪ We will also tell you how to escalate your complaint to Stage 2 if you are not satisfied with your response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Within 5 working days of receiving your complaint we will write to you to acknowledge receipt▪ The person handling your stage 2 complaint will not be the same person who handled it at Stage1.▪ A final response to your stage 2 complaint will be sent to you within 20 working days from the date your stage 2 complaint was acknowledged.▪ If the investigation is going to take longer due to the complexity of the complaint, we will let you know why and how much longer it will take.▪ The response will address all points raised in your complaint alongside clear reasons for any decision and the details of any remedy to put things right.▪ As this is the final stage in our complaints process, we will then tell you how to escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman if you are still dissatisfied.

Learning from complaints

It's important we take on board the feedback our customers give us as part of our complaints process and that we learn from it. Each year we will produce an **Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report** that will be reported to the Society's Board and will be published on our website. In addition, we will regularly keep residents updated on any changes we make because of complaints learning via our newsletters.

Our Complaints Policy is available on our website at www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk or call us for a copy.

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The Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Housing Ombudsman service is an independent, impartial, and free service set up by law to look at complaints about Housing Associations and Local Authorities that are registered with them.

As a resident of Stoke on Trent Housing Society you have the right to contact the Ombudsman at any point during the complaint process, the assistance they can offer depends on whether our complaints procedure has been completed and when.

If you have already complained to us, the Ombudsman can help with your complaint and discuss with you what outcomes and actions would put things right for you.

The Ombudsman can also assist you with receiving a response from us, they can contact us to find out if a formal complaint has been logged, they can make sure we understand that you want to make a complaint and ensure that we follow our process. They can also find out when you can expect to receive our response.

If you have received a response to your complaint from us but you remain dissatisfied with the outcome the Ombudsman can discuss with you your options and help you identify the most appropriate action. This may be the next stage in our complaints process, unless you have been advised that our process has concluded.

In our final written response to you (we call this stage 2) we will tell you that you can now refer your complaint to the Ombudsman for investigation.

What happens if I complain to the Ombudsman?

Once the Ombudsman has had time to consider the individual circumstances of your complaint, they will decide the best way to resolve it. They may:

- Advise you to contact a different organisation if it is an issue that they are better placed to resolve.
- Help you get a response from us and to progress the matter via our complaints process.
- Work with you and us to resolve the dispute through an agreement.
- Carry out an investigation into the way we dealt with the initial problem and how we dealt with your complaint. They will assess whether this was fair by looking at the evidence.

The Ombudsman's statutory Complaint Handling Code

The Housing Ombudsman has a Complaint Handling Code that all Housing Associations and Local Authorities must follow. The purpose of the code is to enable the swift resolution of complaints, providing clarity for residents and the opportunity to learn for landlords.

The Ombudsman has a legal duty to monitor compliance with the Code, regardless of whether it receives complaints from residents about a landlord. This means that Stoke on Trent Housing Society will complete a self-assessment against the code, submitting it annually to the Ombudsman and publishing it on our website.

How to engage with the Ombudsman

- ✓ Fill in an online application form at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- ✓ Telephone: 0300 111 3000 or Fax: 020 7831 1942.
- ✓ Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- ✓ Write to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ.

