

# **West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative Complaints Policy**

## **1. Why have complaints procedures?**

West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative aims to provide a first class service to all our tenants, but there may be occasions when you're not happy about something, and if this is the case it's important to let us know.

The aim of this complaints procedure is to give clear details on what steps you can take to get things put right where there's a problem. It also gives us the chance to monitor the quality of service we provide so that we can improve it where needed.

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

Anyone who receives or asks for a service from the Co-operative can use the procedure. This includes tenants and applicants.

## **3. What can you complain about?**

You can complain about any part of our service, which you are not happy with.

Complaints about neighbours will be dealt with under our estate management procedures but if you have a complaint about how we have dealt with a neighbour dispute, then you can use this procedure.

You will be given as much information as possible about your complaint but some things like personal details must be kept confidential.

## **4. Sorting things out informally**

You have every right to make a formal complaint whenever you wish, but it can often be quicker and easier to sort things out informally, the choice is yours.

The best thing to do is to contact the appropriate member of staff and let them know what the problem is; hopefully things can be put right this way.

## **5. The formal complaints procedure**

If a complaint can't be sorted out informally, the formal complaints procedure can be started as follows:

- If a complaint is about an aspect of service, you should write to the Director
- If a complaint is against a staff member, you should write to the Director.
- If a complaint is against The Director, you should write to the Chairperson.
- If it warrants action under the Co-operatives disciplinary procedures, they will be invoked.
- If the complaint is about a Committee Member, you should write to The Chairperson.
- If the complaint is about the Chairperson, you should write the Secretary.

When you make a complaint, it is very important for you to let us know exactly what the problem is and how you would like to see it resolved. We would encourage complaints to be made in writing but, if a complaint is made verbally, the person noting it will check they have a correct record and you will normally be asked to sign it and a copy given to you.

You will be written to within 48 hours to acknowledge your complaint is being dealt with, and with details of the steps to be taken to fully investigate your complaint.

You will be written to again, within 2 working weeks, to let you know the outcome and steps to be taken to sort out the problem.

If you are not happy with the outcome, you will be able to use the appeals procedure.

## 6. The appeals procedure

If you do not think that your complaint has been sorted out satisfactorily, you can appeal to the Co-operatives Management Committee

This is the final internal appeal about any complaint or the decision made following any complaint.

- To make an appeal, you should write to the Chairperson
- You will get a written response within 3 working days to acknowledge your appeal.
- A hearing to investigate your complaint will be arranged within 2 working weeks and you will be told of the date and time so that you can meet with the Management Committee to present your case.
- If you are attending, you have the right to be accompanied by a person of your choice.
- You will be written to again, within 4 weeks of your complaint being received, to let you know the outcome.

**If there is to be any delay to the stated timescales, you will be told of the reasons and a new timescale will be given.**

If you are not happy with the outcome, you will be able to contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## 7. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If you are still unhappy about the outcome of the complaint after the internal complaints procedure is exhausted, you can complain to the independent Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

A leaflet on the work of The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is available at the Co-operative's offices. The contact details are as follows:

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

4 Melville Street

Edinburgh

EH3 7NS

Telephone

0800 377 7330

Fax

0800 377 7331

Web Address

[www.spsso.org.uk](http://www.spsso.org.uk)

The Ombudsman cannot normally look at complaints more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about or that have been or are being considered in court.

## 8. Who will know about my complaint?

As far as possible all complaints dealt with by The Co-operative will be confidential.

To fully investigate a complaint it might be necessary to reveal details to internal parties.

If you want complete confidentiality on a complaint you must appreciate this may lead to difficulties in investigating and resolving the complaint.

## 9. Improving our service to you

Complaints can help us as well as you! They give the Co-operative feedback on service and could lead to changes, which would improve future services. In this light The Co-operative is happy to encourage complaints.

Complaints are not the only way of letting us know what you think of services. Suggestions for improvements are always welcome and we regularly seek your views through surveys.

If you have any ideas, let us know!