

Complaints Policy



A Guide to the Complaints Procedure

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Making a complaint

We hope that the services you receive from us are of the quality you need. However, we know that there may be times when you are unhappy with the service you receive, or you may want to suggest a way to improve it.

The people who can best deal with most concerns are those who provide the service. We can normally resolve concerns, mistakes and misunderstandings quickly. However, if we cannot sort out your problem this way, the complaints procedure is here to help you.

Your complaints are important to us. They help us to:

- Put things right when they go wrong
- Listen and learn; and
- Change and improve the way we provide services.

So don't be worried about telling us your concerns

What is a complaint?

A complaint can be defined as *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents'*.

You do not need to use the word *complaint* for your concern to be treated as one. If you express dissatisfaction with any of our services, we will always give you the option to have the matter dealt with as a formal complaint

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

In contrast a service request is a request from a resident to their landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. We record, monitor and review service requests regularly. A complaint should be raised when a resident raises dissatisfaction with the response to their service request.

There are certain matters that may not be considered a complaint. For example:

- A complaint that has already been considered and resolved in accordance with our complaints procedure.
- A matter that is or has already been dealt with through legal proceedings.
- Survey feedback.
- Some complaints that occurred more than twelve months ago.
- A service request.
- A matter being considered via our appeals process.
- Enquiry about the progress of a repair.
- Reporting a neighbour dispute.

An informal complaint is usually an issue that can be resolved within a day. However, if an informal complaint cannot be resolved within 1 business day the matter is automatically escalated to our stage 1 complaints.

If we are unable to accept your complaint because it falls outside our complaints criteria, we will explain this in writing and set out the reasons for our decision. Each complaint will be considered on its own merits. If you remain dissatisfied with our decision, we will advise you of your right to refer the matter to the Housing Ombudsman.

If the issue occurred more than 12 months before the complaint is made, SGH will use its discretion to decide whether to accept the complaint.

Who can complain?

A complaint can be made by any person (not only residents) who believe that we have either failed to comply with our service standards, or if any other area of our services does not meet acceptable standards.

You can nominate a representative to make a complaint on your behalf. As long as we receive your written authority to SGH that your nominee can act on your behalf in relation to your complaint we are happy to liaise with them. We do not require any consent if you are wanting to bring someone along with you to a meeting with us.

When should I complain?

Our complaints procedure is intended for those times when you feel we have failed to deliver what we should. The standards we aim to achieve are set out in our service standards and customer service charter. If our service falls short, you

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

should make a complaint. Examples of when to complain are if we:

- Fail to take action after you first contacted us.
- Failed to provide a service on time, or to the standard we promised.
- We are not patient, helpful and respectful in dealing with you.
- Provide a service that was unfair.
- Got something wrong.
- Dissatisfied with our response to a service request.

The complaints procedure is not for everyday matters such as enquiring about repair progress or reporting neighbour disputes.

How can I complain?

We want to make it as easy for you as possible to let us know if you feel something has gone wrong

You can complain:

- by telephone on 02074195140
- in writing either by letter or completing a complaints form
- in person, at our offices
- over the internet by visiting www.stgeorgehousing.co.uk/
- by email info@stgeorgehousing.co.uk
- Via Whats app on 07554 583155

If you need any help, please ask a member of staff.

You may also want to ask for help from your local councilor, a voluntary agency, relative or friend.

Our complaints procedure

We have a simple three stage procedure for complaints

- STAGE 1** We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days of receipt.
We aim to respond to your complaint within 10 working days. If there are any reasons why this will not be possible, we will contact you and give you a new date for our response.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

STAGE 2

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at stage 1, you can take the matter further. We will include details of how you do this in your stage 1 response.

We will acknowledge your stage 2 complaint within 5 working days. At stage 2 your complaint will be investigated by the relevant head of service. Again, we aim to respond to your complaint within 20 working days of the complaints being acknowledged. The person considering your stage 2 complaints will not be the same person as stage 1.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

STAGE 3

If you are still not happy after the stage 2 response, you can refer for your complaint to be dealt with by your complaint to your local Councilor or Member of Parliament who will try to find a resolution to your complaint and who may refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

We will include details of how you do this in your stage 2

Should you not want to refer your complaint to your Councilor or M.P. you may refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman yourself. However, should you do this the Housing Ombudsman will not look into your complaint for at least eight weeks, after the end of St George Housing procedure (i.e. the end of Stage 2).

The contact details for the Housing Ombudsman are:

Housing Ombudsman Service
2nd Floor 10 South Collonades
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU
Telephone: 0300 111 3000
Fax: 020 7831 1942
Email : info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Only the following people can make complaints against a member landlord for investigation by the Ombudsman;

- (a) A person who has (or had at the time of the matter complained of) a lease, tenancy, license to occupy, service agreement or other arrangement to occupy premises owned or managed by a member landlord;
- (b) A person who is or was liable to pay (or who at the time of the matter complained of) a service charge to a member landlord;
- (c) An applicant for a property owned or managed by a member landlord;
- (d) A representative of any of the people above who is authorised by them to make and pursue the complaint on their behalf;
- (e) A representative of a person otherwise entitled to complain where the Ombudsman is satisfied in the circumstances that that person cannot pursue the complaint on their own behalf.

Our complaints policy is available on our website here. In addition, you will also find a copy of the Housing Ombudsman complaints handling code and our self-assessment against it on our website here.

If a complaint is complex and requires more time to investigate, SGH may extend the response timescale by up to 10 working days for stage 1 complaints and 20 working days for stage 2 complaints. In such cases, we will inform the resident of the revised timescale and clearly explain the reason for the extension. Where decide to do this you will still be able to escalate your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaint form

Your details

Your name:
Your address:

Contact

Day:	Evening:
Email address:	

Details of your complaint:

Please tell us as much as possible about your complaint

Please use additional sheets if necessary

Have you contacted us before about this matter? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, who did you contact?

Complaint form

What actions will you like us to take to resolve this complaint or put things right

Signed

Date

If you have any letters or documents to support your complaint, such as letters from us, please send a copy with this form.

Please answer the following questions to help us make sure we provide a fair service to all people in the community. We will keep this information strictly confidential, and it will not affect how we investigate your complaint

Please tick the appropriate boxes

Are you: ☐ Male? ☐ Female?

Are you: ☐ 16 - 25 ☐ 26 – 45 ☐ 46 - 64 ☐ 65 or above

Do you have a disability? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you: ☐ Asian ☐ African ☐ Caribbean ☐ UK black ☐ White

☐ Turkish or Turkish Cypriot ☐ Greek or Greek Cypriot

☐ Other, please state

***Please return form to: Customer Care Team
SGH
Office 1574, High Street, East Ham
London,
E6 2J6
Or you can email the form to:
info@stgeorgehousing.c.uk***