

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 ARK HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD (ARK) is committed to providing high-quality customer services.

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

1.2 If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This Policy describes our complaints process (see Appendix 1) and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about our service standards and what you can expect from us.

2.0 What is a complaint?

2.1 We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction by any service user or tenant or their family, friends, or representatives, or members of the general public, about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

3.0 What can I complain about?

3.1 You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- our standard of service
- dissatisfaction with our policy
- treatment by or attitude of a member of staff
- our failure to follow proper procedure.

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

4.0 What can't I complain about?

4.1 There are some things we cannot deal with through our complaints procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service, for example reporting a problem that needs to be repaired or initial action on anti social behaviour
- requests for compensation

- our policies and procedures that have a separate right of appeal, for example, if you are dissatisfied with the level of priority you have been given when applying for a house, you may have the right to appeal against the decision
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our **final** decision following a stage 2 investigation. If you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review of the complaint.

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

5.0 Who can complain?

5.1 Any member of the public can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service. Please also read the section on 'Getting help to make your complaint' (Section 14).

6.0 How do I complain?

6.1 You can complain in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, email or by using our complaints form which is included at Appendix 2 and can be downloaded from our Website (<https://www.arkha.org.uk/how-we-work/how-to-make-a-complaint/>).

6.2 It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve any problems on the spot.

6.3 When complaining, tell us:

- your full name and address
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong
- how you want us to resolve the matter.

7.0 How long do I have to make a complaint?

7.1 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, but no longer than 12 months after the event itself.

7.2 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.

8.0 Contact details

ARK Housing Association Ltd
The Priory,
Canaan Lane,
Edinburgh EH10 4SG

Telephone: 0131 447 9027
Email: complaints@arkha.org.uk
Website: www.arkha.org.uk

9.0 What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages:

9.1 Stage one – frontline resolution

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provided the service. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong and immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If we can't resolve your complaint at this stage, we will explain why. If you are still dissatisfied you can ask for your complaint to be investigated further through stage 2. You may choose to do this immediately or some time after you get our initial response. We can help you with making this request.

9.2 Stage two – investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.

When using stage 2 we will:

- acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- discuss your complaint with you to understand why you remain dissatisfied and what outcome you are looking for
- give you a full response to the complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

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

10.0 What if I'm still dissatisfied?

10.1 After we have fully investigated, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

10.2 The SPSO **cannot** normally look at:

- a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure (**so please make sure it has done so before contacting the SPSO**)
- events that happened, or that you became aware of, more than a year ago
- a matter that has been or is being considered in court.

You can contact the SPSO:

In Person at:

SPSO
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

By Post to:

SPSO
Freepost SPSO (this is all you need to write on the envelope and you don't need to use a stamp)

Freephone: 0800 377 7330
Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spsso.org.uk
Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

11.0 Care complaints

- 11.1 If your complaint relates to a care service we provide, you can choose whether to complain to us or to the Care Inspectorate. You can find out more about their complaints procedure, or make a complaint, by contacting the Care Inspectorate. Information about their complaints procedure, contact details and [offices around Scotland](#), and information about how to complain are all on their website: www.careinspectorate.com

Or you can contact them by:

Telephone	0345 600 9527
Online	complaints form
email	enquiries@careinspectorate.com

12.0 Care complaints to your Local Authority

- 12.1 If your complaint relates to a care service we provide which was commissioned by a Local Authority, you can choose whether to complain to us or to the Local Authority. Further information on whether your service is commissioned by the Local Authority and how to complain to your Local Authority is available from your local ARK office.

13.0 Reporting a Significant Performance Failure to the Scottish Housing Regulator

- 13.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about 'significant performance failures'. A significant performance failure is defined by the SHR as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systematic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.
- 13.2 A complaint between an individual tenant and a landlord is not a significant performance failure. Significant performance failures are not, therefore, dealt with through this complaints handling policy and the procedure which supports it. You can ask us for more information about significant performance failures. The SHR also has more information on their website: <http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/> or you can phone them on: 0141 242 5642.

14.0 Getting help to make your complaint

- 14.1 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.

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

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Tel: 0131 556 6443

Fax: 0131 550 9819

Website: www.siaa.org.uk

Citizens Advice Scotland

Website: www.cas.org.uk

Or check your phone book for your local bureau.

- 14.3 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 please tell us.

- 14.4 We can also give you this Policy in other languages and formats (such as **large print**, audio and Braille).

15.0 Our contact details

- 15.1 Please contact us by the following means:

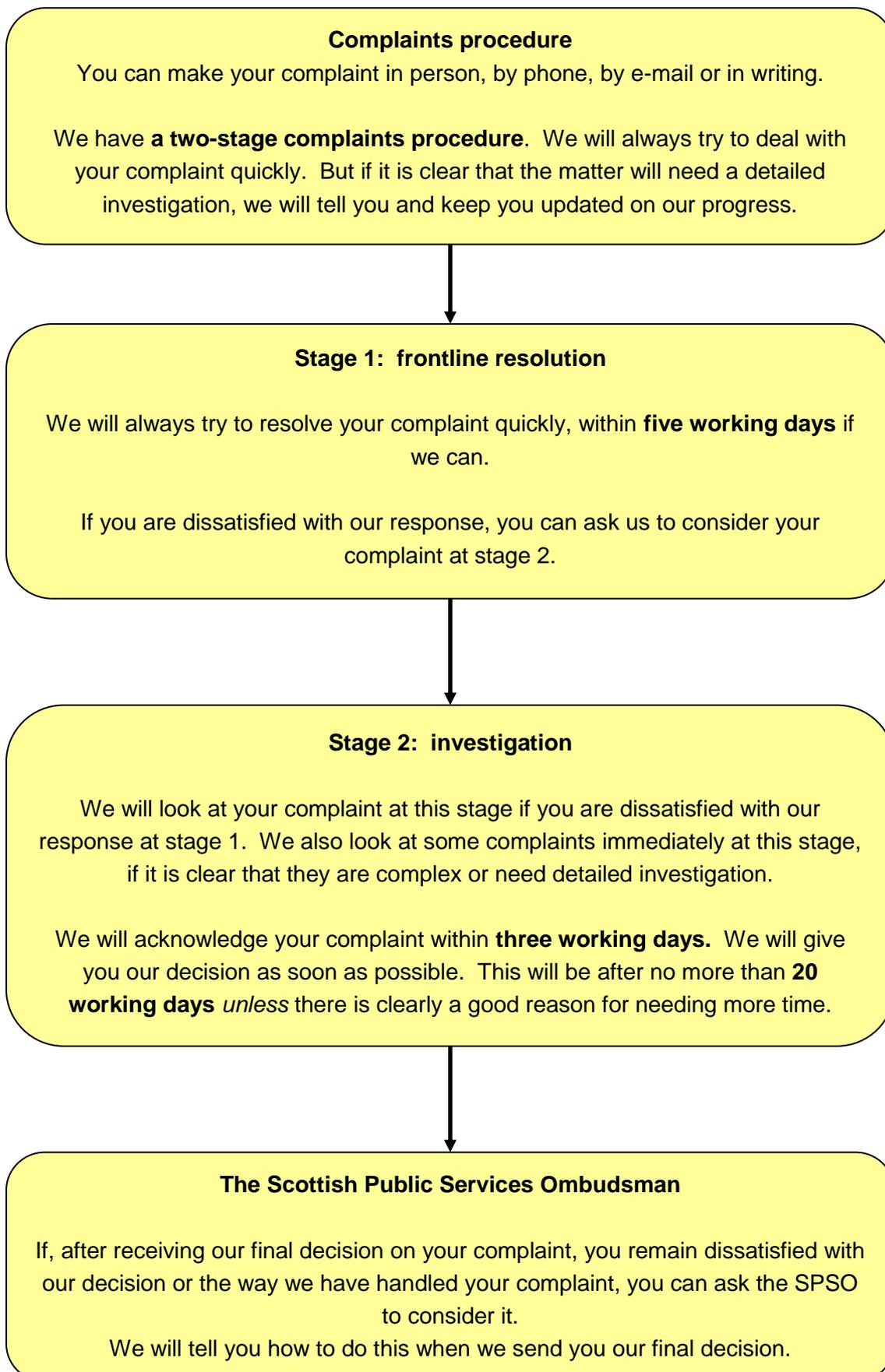
In writing or in person: ARK Housing Association Ltd
The Priory,
Canaan Lane,
Edinburgh EH10 4SG

(Or at any of our local offices)

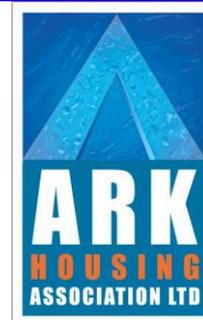
By telephone: 0131 447 9027
By email: complaints@arkha.org.uk
Through our website: www.arkha.org.uk

Approved by the SLT:	June 2016
Approved by the Board of Management:	August 2016
Review of policy due by:	August 2019
Complies with:	SSHC Outcome 2

Quick guide to our complaints procedure



Making a complaint about



ARK Housing Association Ltd

The Priory, Canaan Lane, Edinburgh EH10 4SG

Email: complaints@arkha.org.uk Telephone: 0131 447 9027



If you want to make a complaint you can use this form. You can write what you want to tell ARK here.

However, you may want to speak to someone in person or by phone. Or you can ask someone such as a friend or family member to do it for you. You can also make a complaint without telling us who you are.

A copy of our Complaints Policy is available

on our website and on request.



Provide us with as much information about your complaint as you can, by using this page and the next one.



Please write clearly.

Your Name:

Your Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

Daytime Tel No:

Details of your Complaint:



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

What would you like us to do to resolve this issue?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....



Signature:

Date:

If you don't have enough space on this form for everything you want to tell us, please continue on a separate sheet of paper.

Please send your completed form to

ARK Housing Association Ltd

The Priory, Canaan Lane, Edinburgh EH10 4SG

www.arkha.org.uk



Email: complaints@arkha.org.uk



Telephone: 0131 447 9027

If you make a complaint to ARK and you are not happy with the result after going through our procedure, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman: **The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**



4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS

Freepost SPSO
(this is all you need to write- you don't need to use a stamp)

Tel: 0800 377 7330

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Mobile site: <http://m.spsso.org.uk>

Online:

www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us



As well as, or instead of, complaining to ARK you can also complain at any time to the Care Inspectorate:

Care Inspectorate

Compass House, 11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY

Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.com

Telephone 0845 600 9527

Local Authority

If your local authority asked us to provide the service you want to complain about you can choose who you want to complain to. If you need information about how to complain to your Local Authority please contact your local ARK office, or our Head Office at the Priory in Edinburgh.

