

Policy Name: Complaints

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Responsible Executive	Customer Service Director		
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1. Introduction

Clyde Valley Housing Association is committed to providing excellent, high quality Customer Service.

We value complaints as an opportunity to put things right and we 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 Policy outlines our approach to dealing with complaints.

2. Scope of the Policy

2.1. What is a complaint?

We regard a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

What can I complain about?

- 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.

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

2.2. What can't I complain about?

There are some things we cannot deal with through our complaint's 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 that do not relate to a complaint.
- 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.

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

3. Policy Aims and Objectives

3.1. The aim of this Policy is to ensure that complaints made by our customers are responded to timeously and that we adopt an approach which seeks to resolve issues, learn from them and adopt a resolution focused approach to support continuous improvement.

Our Complaints are managed within the guidelines stipulated by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. This includes guidance on categorising and responding to complaints within stated timescales.

4. Definitions

4.1. This section defines any key terms that have been used within the policy to ensure consistent understanding.

Key Term	Definitions
SPSO	Scottish Public Services Ombudsman – this is the Government appointed body which issues guidance and defines the timescales in which public bodies must manage complaints. They are the regulatory body which also manages the final stage of appeal in the complaints process.
Stage One Complaint	Complaints which can be resolved at front line, often with an apology or explanation
Stage Two Complaint	Complaints which are more complex in nature and require investigation before resolution

5. Managing Complaints

This section outlines the content of the policy, with applicable headings for the policy.

5.1. Who can complain?

Anyone can make a complaint to us, including the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service.

5.2. How do I complain?

You can complain in person at our office at 50 Scott Street, Motherwell, by phone, in writing, email or by using our complaints form which is available on our web site [Customer Complaints \(cvha.org.uk\)](http://Customer.Complaints(cvha.org.uk)).

It is easier for us to resolve complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. Please approach any member of our team to raise your complaint. Our Contact Centre team are available during office hours to discuss any requests or complaints.

When complaining, tell us:

- Your full name, address, and email
- As much as you can about the complaint
- What has gone wrong?
- How you want us to resolve the matter.

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

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.

Contact details

Clyde Valley Housing Association
50 Scott Street
Motherwell
ML1 1PN

Telephone: 01698 268855

Email: cvha@cvha.org.uk

5.4. What happens when I have complained?

Stage one – frontline resolution

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

We aim to resolve complaints quickly and as 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 cannot 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 sometime after you get our initial response. We can help you with making this request.

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.

Stage 2 complaints will be managed by a different member of staff from the initial Stage 1 complaint. Also, as Stage 2 complaints are often more complex in nature and require deeper investigation, they will be managed by more senior staff, either Senior Officers and/or Managers. This is important to ensure impartiality, effective investigation, and fair outcomes in line with our Policies, Procedures and Customer Commitments.

5.5. Child Friendly Complaints

On 18 April 2024, the SPSO laid its proposed revision to the Complaint Handling Principles in anticipation of the enactment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (the UNCRC Act) which takes effect from 16 July 2024. The revision creates some additional child friendly complaints principles which will apply to public bodies falling under the remit of SPSO, whenever a complaint involves a child.

This means that when we receive complaints from or involving children, we must follow certain principles. These principles help ensure that the Complaints process is fair and easy to understand. A child is anyone under 18 years of age. Complaints be made:

- Made directly about a child
- Made on by an adult on behalf of a child or something that affects a child.

The SPSO guidance helps us process complaints in a way that is friendly for children and that follows the United Nations rules.

When making the Complaints process friendly, we must:

- Let children and young people up to 18 years old share their views in a way that they feel comfortable with
- Keep a good record of the complaints process and the evidence.
- Give feedback to the child or young person in a way that makes sense to them.

The full SPSO guidance can be found here: [Child Friendly Complaints-handling Principles](#).

6. Complaints about Factoring

6.1. Complaints regarding Factoring Services are managed within our standard Stage one/Stage two escalation process. However, the escalation route differs and is detailed below.

6.2. Housing and Property Chamber

Under Section 17 of the Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011, homeowners can make an application to the Housing and Property Chamber for a determination of whether their property factor has failed to conduct their property factoring duties or failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

6.3. To take a complaint to the Housing and Property Chamber, homeowners must firstly notify their property factor in writing of the reasons why they consider that the property factor has failed to perform their duties or failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. The property factor must also have refused to resolve the homeowner's concerns or have unreasonably delayed attempting to resolve them.

- 6.4. The property factor must keep a written record of all complaints made by homeowners or third parties during the past three years in case this information is required by the Housing and Property Chamber.

The property factor must comply with any request from the Housing and Property Chamber to provide information relating to an application from a homeowner.

Housing and Property Chamber
First-tier
Tribunal for Scotland
Glasgow Tribunals Centre
20 York Street
Glasgow
G2 8GT
Telephone: 0141 302 5900
Fax: 0141 302 5901
HPCAdmin@scotcourtribunals.gov.uk

7. Roles and Responsibilities - What if I am still dissatisfied?

- 7.1. If we have managed your complaint at Stage one but you are not satisfied, you can escalate your complaint to Stage two. If you remain unsatisfied with the outcome of our stage 2 response you can escalate your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at your complaint. However, as noted, if your complaint is regarding a Factoring Complaint, your escalation route is noted at section 6.4 of this Policy.

- 7.2. 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

Bridgeside House

99 McDonald Road

Edinburgh

EH7 4NS

www.spsso.org.uk @SPSO_OMBUDSMAN

Telephone: 0800 377 7330

8. Getting help to make your Complaint

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

- **Citizens Advice Scotland**

Citizens Advice Scotland may be able to give you further advice and guidance. You can discuss your concerns with your local Citizens Advice Bureau. To find your nearest Bureau please visit www.cas.org.uk

- **Shelter Scotland**

Shelter Scotland has plenty of advice, including a benefits calculator, on their website. You can call their free national helpline for advice. Make sure you say you are calling from Scotland as advice for people living here will be different from that given for England and Wales.

Telephone helpline: 0808 800 4444

Website: www.scotland.shelter.org.uk

- **Law Society of Scotland**

You may also wish to seek advice about whether there is a legal route for your concerns.

The Law Society of Scotland may be able to help you find a solicitor.

Telephone: 0131 226 7411

Website: www.lawscot.org.uk

9. Legal and Regulatory Framework

9.1. In managing our Complaints Clyde Valley Group will fully comply with its statutory obligations as laid out in:

- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- The Equality Act 2010 is the key legislation in Scotland that prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics such as age, disability, and race. This law makes it unlawful to discriminate, harass, or victimize someone for these characteristics in areas like the workplace, education, and public services. Scotland also has specific regulations, like the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, which place a Public Sector Equality Duty on public bodies to advance equality and report on progress.
- Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011. This is the core legislation governing factoring services in Scotland.
- Code of Conduct for Property Factors (revised 2021). This code sets out minimum standards of practice for all registered property factors.

9.2. Clyde Valley Group also ensures there are rigorous processes in place to monitor our Complaints Handling Process. We report to our Board on a monthly basis and to the Scottish Housing Regulator within our annual return.

10. Communication and Awareness

10.1. This policy is posted on the Clyde Valley Website and is accessible to all. The key stakeholders outlined within the policy will receive awareness training around roles and responsibilities and key areas of the policy and related procedures. At each review of the policy there will be no formal awareness unless significant changes have been made, in this case a general notification of the revisions will be posted through the briefing process.

10.2. This Policy is available to anyone on request.

Staff Group	Training/Awareness Required	Method
All staff	Updated Policy will be shared with all staff.	SharePoint
Customer Services Directorate Asset and Repairs	Customer Services Manager & Senior Contact Centre Officer awareness sessions	Attend Team meetings when updated Policy approved

11. Risk Management

11.1. Clyde Valley Group will manage any identified risks through its Risk Management Policy ensuring that risks are identified, assessed, managed, and mitigated.

12. Improvement, Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years. In addition to this, if there is a legislative change, or update in procedural guidance, the Policy will be updated accordingly.

Reviews will incorporate tenant and stakeholder feedback, any learning and regulatory updates. Any amendments to the policy will be communicated to staff and stakeholders within 30 days of approval.

12.1. Internal Assurance

A formal system of monitoring the Policy will be established and maintained with properly defined reporting, escalation, and action procedures.

Complaints performance is also closely monitored to ensure targets are met.

In addition to this customer feedback and quality assurance will be maintained by monitoring customer surveys.

- Complaints performance is reported on a monthly basis to the Clyde Valley Group Leadership Team
- Complaints performance is reported to the Board on a quarterly basis.
- An annual return to the Scottish Housing Regulator

12.2. External Quality Assurance

An external third party shall be appointed to conduct an audit of the Complaints Policy. Reviews are conducted on a cyclical basis, usually every three years.

13. Training and Competency

All staff with responsibilities in Complaints handlings are required to ensure they are familiar with this policy and their specific roles and responsibilities.

In addition to this, Clyde Valley People Team will maintain a record of all Training for both existing and new members of staff.

14. Key References and Supporting Documents

Further information and advice on our duty to handle Complaints, in line with regulatory guidelines can be found on the SPSO Website [Home | SPSO](#).

15. General Data Protection Regulations

CVG will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in CVG's Employee Privacy Notice.

16. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

At Clyde Valley we value people and their diversity and strive to be inclusive. We respect others, regardless of personal differences and we listen to people to understand their needs and tailor our service accordingly. We will strive to promote equal access to our service for all members of the community and provide fair and equal treatment, promoting human rights in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Policy.

17. Approval and Review History

This section should include any version control, what changes were made to the document and when these were approved and by whom.

Version	Author of Change	Changes	Approved by	Date Approved
1.3	A Cairns	Updates recommended by Audit (2025) regarding being specific about escalated complaints being managed by a different staff member. Update to include links to guidance on Child Friendly Complaints. Policy transferred to new corporate template.	Board	16/03/26