



Housing Service

Customer Complaints

Responsible Officer:	Executive Manager – Housing Service
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Shetland Islands Council Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure

The Shetland Islands Council Housing Service Complaints are dealt with according to the Shetland Islands Council [corporate complaints handling procedure](#).

Dealing with Complaints

- All Housing staff based at 8 North Ness and Gremista have access to the Housing Complaints Database and are able to add and update complaints.
- Once a complaint has been received, it should be logged on the Housing complaints database. The Details of Complaint should be brief and concise and the Notes section should be used for the fuller explanation as required.
- A new complaint folder should be created using the Complaint ID number as the folder name. Any documents relating to the complaint should be scanned/saved in the complaint folder.
- Decide whether or not a complaint is suitable for a frontline resolution or requires investigation.

Stage one - Frontline Resolution (5 working days)

For issues that are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation. 'On-the-spot' apology, explanation, or other action to resolve the complaint quickly, in 5 working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Complaints addressed by an member of staff or alternatively referred to the appropriate point for frontline resolution. Complaint details, outcome and action taken recorded and used for service improvement.

- Actions and notes should be recorded on the Housing complaints database by the officer dealing with the complaint.
- The Management Team member must update the database to close any frontline resolution complaint.
- Where necessary, a complaint outcome letter should be sent to the complainant.

- If corrective or preventative action is required, Quality Procedure (QP4) should be followed.

Stage two – Investigation (20 working days)

For issues that have not been resolved at the frontline or that are complex, serious or 'high risk'. A definitive response provided within 20 working days following a thorough investigation of the points raised. Responses signed off by senior management who have an active interest in complaints and use information gathered to improve services.

If the complaint is considered a Stage 2 Investigation, an acknowledgement letter should be sent to the complainant within 3 working days.

- The details of complaint must be passed to the relevant member of the Housing Management Team (MT).
- The member of MT should confirm the complaint stage
- The complaint has to be assigned on the database to the relevant Management Team Member.
- The Management Team member must update the database and assign a member of staff to investigate the complaint.
- Documents relating to the complaint should then be passed and e-mailed to the investigating officer.
- The investigating officer should then carry out the relevant investigations, updating the database with notes and any outcomes and actions taken.
- A complaint outcome letter should be sent to the complainant.
- All documents should be saved in the relevant complaints folder.
- The Management Team member should be advised that the complaint has been dealt with.
- The Management Team member should close the complaint on the database and record any associated action required. The Underlying Cause and Lessons Learnt fields should be completed where appropriate.
- If corrective or preventative action is required, Quality Procedure (QP4) should be followed.

Stage three – Independent External Review (SPSO or other)

For issues that have not been resolved by the service provider. Complaints progressing to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) will have been thoroughly investigated by the service provider. The SPSO will assess whether there is evidence of service failure or maladministration not identified by the service provider.

For issues that have not been resolved relating to Housing Support Shetland, contact should be made with the Care Inspectorate.

- If advised that the SPSO, Care Inspectorate or other independent external reviewer is investigating a complaint previously received by the Housing Service, a member of MT must update the system accordingly.

Review of Complaints

The Housing Service Management Team review all complaints regularly at their team meetings and take appropriate action where required.

Complaints Handling Performance

How the SIC Housing Service performs in relation to complaints handling is included in the annual Scottish Housing Regulator return which is submitted and reported on an annual basis.

Appendix A

External Contact Details

Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO)

Address: SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS

Freepost address: SPSO
Freepost EH641
Edinburgh
EH3 0BR

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

The Care Inspectorate

Address: 2nd Floor
Charlotte House
Commercial Road
Lerwick
Ze1 0LX

Tel: 01595 741520

Address: Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

Tel: 01382 207100

Web link: <http://www.careinspectorate.com>