

Complaints policy and procedure (Information for Customers)

Please note this policy can be made available in a range of formats. Please contact the Head Office if you require this document translated or issued in a format which is more appropriate for you.

Why does Sutton Housing Society have a complaints procedure?

Sutton Housing Society aims to provide a good service to its residents and other customers. We aim to get things right first time but accept that mistakes can happen. If we make mistakes, we want to be able to correct them as quickly as possible and to learn from those mistakes.

This Complaints policy and procedure leaflet explains how we deal with complaints.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined by the Housing Ombudsman Service 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.”*

Complaints are important as they provide a measurement of resident / customer satisfaction with the services we provide. They can help us assess when services are not working, or policies / procedures may need amending.

Who can make a complaint?

Anyone that requests and / or receives a service from Sutton Housing Society can make a complaint.

Complainants may ask another person to act on their behalf in bringing their complaint to our attention. This advocate may be a friend, relative or representative from an external organisation such as the Citizens Advice. An advocate may not be a solicitor or other legal professional unless they are acting in a 'lay' capacity i.e. not representing the complainant on a professional basis.

The complainant can make a complaint about any aspect of Sutton Housing Society's service e.g.:

- something being done wrongly or badly
- something not being done or a delay in something being done
- impolite or unhelpful staff or contractors
- a decision that the complainant feels is unfair
- the Society not operating its policies fairly
- the Society not fulfilling its legal duties

It is inevitable that complaints will be received, and it is important that staff respond to complaints in an open, transparent and helpful way. Sutton Housing Society can and should learn from the feedback received and this can also lead to changes in policy and procedure.

What is not considered a complaint?

We would not normally deal with the following matters under our complaints procedure:

- Complaints about the behaviour of other people, such as neighbours; this would be more appropriately dealt with through the anti-social behaviour /nuisance procedure
- An insurance claim
- Where legal action is being taken

How can complaints be made?

You can complain by:

- Email using hello@shsoc.org.uk (available for use 24/7)
- Telephone by calling 020 8642 1500 (available for use 24/7)
- In person by visiting the office at Pat Shaw House, 13 – 19 Ventnor Road, Sutton SM2 6AQ (apart from bank holidays, available weekdays 9am – 5pm)
- In writing to the office at Pat Shaw House
- In person, speaking to an SHS staff member on site
- Via social media platforms Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Please note that for any complaints received via social media, staff will contact the individual directly but not via social media to discuss the situation with them.

Sutton Housing Society has 2 stages to our complaint's procedure:

Stage 1 – investigation of the complaint:

The investigation is usually carried out by the manager responsible for the person or service being complained about on a day to day basis. The target time for responding to complaints is 10 working days from the receipt date.

Stage 2 – reviewing the decision:

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of Stage 1, the complainant should contact the Operations Director, stating why the outcome is not acceptable. This can be carried out in several ways, as listed in “how to make a complaint” above. The contact must be made within 10 working days of the date of the outcome letter in Stage 1.

There is no appeals process. If a resident remains dissatisfied with how their individual situation has been handled and / or with the outcome, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman.

How are complaints brought to a close?

If the complaint has been responded to or there have not been any further incidents within a 3- m o n t h period, we will close the complaint and issue a complaint satisfaction survey for you to complete. The survey results are shared quarterly with the Board and summarised in our Annual Report.

What further rights of appeal are there if a complainant is still not satisfied?

SHS hopes that any complaints are resolved at Stage 1 or stage 2 at the most. However, should the complainant remain dissatisfied following this, they can ask for a review of the case by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

The Housing Ombudsman will only investigate a complaint where the complainant has exhausted Sutton Housing Society's Complaints procedure, and contact is made within 6 months. The complainant must be a Sutton Housing Society resident or a Sutton Housing Society applicant for housing to raise this with the Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman contact details are:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool
L33 7WQ

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Lo Call: 0845 712 5973

E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Web: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Compensation for failure of services

The Society will pay compensation for failure of certain services. A copy of our Compensation policy, which gives details, is available from the office and should be read in conjunction with this Complaints policy and procedure leaflet.

Advice agencies

Impartial advice can be obtained from various organisations e.g. the Citizens Advice may be able to help. Alternatively, they will provide details of other agencies and support groups who may be able to assist, depending on the problem.

Equality, diversion and inclusion

Sutton Housing Society recognises that residents of all races, religions, gender, sexual orientation, literacy levels and disability should be treated equally and fairly, and we will not discriminate in implementing this policy and procedure.

Sutton Housing Society Ltd, Pat Shaw House, 13-19 Ventnor Road, Sutton SM2 6AQ

Tel: 020 8642 1500

Email: hello@shsoc.org.uk

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