



Complaints Policy

Effective from: 01 April 2025

Version: 3.0

Next Review Due: 31 March 2026

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all residents and stakeholders of Second Chance Housing Limited can raise concerns or complaints in a simple, accessible, and fair way. We aim to resolve complaints promptly and use them to improve our supported housing services.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all complaints received about our services, staff, contractors, or the standard of accommodation we provide. It is open to:

- Residents
- Former residents
- Representatives acting on behalf of a resident (e.g. advocate, family, support worker)
- Other stakeholders interacting with our services

3. What is a Complaint?

We adopt the Housing Ombudsman's definition of a complaint:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents."

Complaints can be raised:

- Verbally (in person or by phone)

- In writing (letter, email, or online form)
- Via a representative

Residents do not need to use the word "complaint" for their concern to be treated as one.

4. What is Not a Complaint?

Some issues fall outside this policy:

- Initial requests for service (e.g. first-time repair reports)
- Complaints about other residents (e.g. antisocial behaviour)
- Anonymous complaints (unless safeguarding is involved)
- Matters subject to legal action

These will be acknowledged and redirected appropriately.

5. Our Complaint Handling Process

We operate a two-stage process in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Code.

Stage 1: Local Resolution

- We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days
- We aim to provide a full written response within 10 working days of acknowledgement
- If more time is needed (e.g. due to complexity), we will explain why and provide a revised deadline (no more than an additional 10 working days)

Stage 2: Formal Review

- If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may request a stage 2 review
- This will be reviewed and responded to by the Managing Director
- A final written response will be issued within 20 working days (with a possible 10-day extension if required)

After stage 2, complaints can be referred to the Housing Ombudsman.

6. Who Handles Complaints?

- Day-to-day complaints are logged by the Admin Team
- Stage 1 complaints are managed by the Operational Manager
- Stage 2 complaints are reviewed by the Managing Director
- All complaint activity is monitored and reviewed quarterly by the Board of Directors

7. How to Complain

Residents can complain:

- To any member of the Support Team in person
- By email: [Insert complaints email]
- By phone: [Insert phone number]
- Online: [Insert link to complaints form]
- Via letter: [Insert postal address]

Support workers can help residents complete forms or submit complaints verbally.
Reasonable adjustments (e.g. Easy Read or large print) are available on request.

8. Unreasonable Complaints

If a complainant behaves in a threatening, abusive, or excessively repetitive manner, we may apply our Unreasonable Behaviour Policy. However, access to the complaints process will never be withdrawn solely due to behaviour.

9. Learning and Improvement

All complaints are logged, reviewed, and analysed. Even with low volumes, we:

- Hold quarterly reviews with the Board
- Log learning points in a central register
- Brief all teams (Admin, Support, Maintenance) on relevant improvements

10. Ombudsman Referral

Residents can refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman if they are not satisfied after stage 2.

Housing Ombudsman Service

Website: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

Phone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

We include this contact information in every stage 1 and stage 2 response.

11. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or following:

- A significant complaint or service failure
- A change in Housing Ombudsman requirements
- Structural changes in Second Chance Housing Limited

Approved by: Board of Directors