

THREE BOROUGHES HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

Service Complaints Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Three Boroughs Co-operative aims to provide a good service to all its Members and applicants for housing but we recognise there will be times when things go wrong. When this happens, we will respond positively to any complaints or feedback received. We want Members to be heard and understood and will view complaints as an opportunity to learn how to do things better.

2. Definition of a Complaint

A complaint is defined 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 Member or group of Members.*

You do not have to use the word complaint in order for it to be treated as such. The Co-operative aims to recognise the difference between a service request, feedback and a formal complaint.

3. Our aims and principles in complaint handling

- All complaints will be dealt with promptly, politely and fairly.
- Complaints will be dealt with in confidence, unless the complainant requests otherwise.
- Complaints will be acknowledged, accurately recorded and monitored.
- Complainants will be kept fully informed of progress and the outcome of any investigation.
- Complainants with special needs, language difficulties or other issues affecting their ability to make a complaint or have it addressed, will be offered additional assistance if needed.
- Where any failure is identified and a complaint is upheld, the Co-operative will offer an appropriate apology and award compensation if the terms of the Compensation Policy are met.
- The complainant will be informed of any changes made or actions taken to prevent the issue from happening again.

4. Who can complain?

- Any housed member
- Those applying to the Co-operative for membership

5. Exclusions to the Complaints Policy

In the following circumstances, a matter will not be considered as a complaint:

- If the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago. This exclusion may not apply where the complaint concerns safeguarding or health and safety issues.
- The issue is, or has been, subject to legal proceedings.
- A liability issue that is subject to an insurance claim. Other elements of the complaint can still be considered through the complaints procedure.

- Matters that have already been considered under the Complaints Policy
- The complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable manner.
- If you tell us about anti-social behaviour caused by another Member or someone else. These matters will be dealt with under the Anti-Social Behaviour policy.

If a matter is not accepted as a complaint, we will explain in detail why this is. Anonymous complaints do not form part of this policy, but may be considered as a way of improving practices or services.

6. How to make a complaint

- Call the Housing Office on 020 8469 3690
- Email the Co-operative Housing Manager at chm@threeboroughs.org.uk Write to the Housing Office, The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford, SE8 4AG
- Call or speak to a Co-operative Officer or member of the Management Committee
- You can ask another person to complain on your behalf, but we will need to be clear they are acting with your permission
- Please see the Co-operative web site for current addresses and telephone numbers for communications

If you remain dissatisfied after using the Co-operative's Complaints Procedure, you may contact the landlord of your property. If you are not sure who your landlord is, please check your tenancy agreement or call the Co-operative's Housing Office.

- Resident Involvement Manager
Hexagon Housing Association
130-136 Sydenham Road, SE26 5JY
Telephone: 020 8778 6699
Email: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk
- Contract Compliance Officer
Optivo
Building 800, Guillat Avenue, Kent Science Park, ME9 8GU Telephone: 020 8726 8761
Email: Co-ops@optivo.org.uk
- Co-operative Liaison Officer
Chisel Ltd
188a Brockley Road, SE4 2RL
Telephone: 020 8692 5258

7. The complaints procedure and timeline

Stage	Action	Target time
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaint will be acknowledged and logged • An investigation will take place and a written response sent to the complainant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 3 working days • Within 10 working days from the receipt of the complaint
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 - a Committee meeting will be held to discuss the complaint and reach a decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within 28 working days • Within 28 working days

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 2 - a Complaints Panel will be formed to discuss the complaint and reach a decision A written response will be sent from the Committee to the complainant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 7 working days following the date of the meeting of the Committee or the Panel
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At a Member's request, the complaint will be referred to the relevant Housing Association An investigation will take place and a written response sent to the complainant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 3 working days In line with the Housing Association's own complaints procedure

Informal Resolution

If you are dissatisfied with the service received, you should contact the Co-operative Housing Manager in the first instance. If the complaint relates to the Manager, you should contact the Secretary of the Co-operative or a trusted member of the Management Committee. When a complaint is made, we will establish what outcome you are seeking. Every effort will be made to resolve your complaint by finding an immediate solution with which you agree.

Formal complaint

Every effort will be made to keep to the timescales outlined in the table above. However, if the matter is complex, the timescales may be extended in order for the complaint to be investigated fully. We will notify you if an extension of time is required.

Stage 1 - if you remain dissatisfied after an attempt at informal resolution, the matter will be logged, investigated and responded to by the Co-operative Housing Manager. The Secretary, or another Co-operative Officer, will respond to any complaints relating to the Manager.

Stage 2 - if you remain unhappy with the stage 1 formal response, the complaint can be escalated to the Management Committee of the Co-operative. Where appropriate the Committee will be responsible for electing a Complaints Panel, consisting of two members of the Management Committee and a third Co-operative Member.

Stage 3 – if you remain dissatisfied with the Stage 2 formal response, the complaint may be raised with the housing association landlord who will consider the complaint in line with their own complaints procedures.

8. Designated person

If you are unable to resolve your complaint through the procedures above, you can contact a designated person to help find a solution. The designated person can be an MP, local councillor or a Tenant panel. They can try to resolve the complaint themselves or refer the complaint straight to the Housing Ombudsman. If you decide not to contact a designated person, you can contact the Housing Ombudsman directly eight weeks after the Co-operative has given you the final response to your complaint.

9. The Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman Service is set up by law to look at complaints from all housing organisations that are registered with them. The service is free, independent and impartial.

If you remain dissatisfied at the end of the Co-operative's and Housing Association's complaints procedures, your complaint can be brought to the Ombudsman service. The Ombudsman will consider all the evidence provided and issue a decision, which may include actions the landlord needs to take and orders for compensation.

You may contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any time to assist throughout the life of a complaint and engage with the Ombudsman's dispute support advisors.

Website	www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Email	info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Phone	0300 111 3000
By post	Housing Ombudsman's Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

10. Learning and Improvement

- The Co-operative will use complaints to learn from mistakes and seek to improve the service it provides to Members.
- Appropriate training will be given to those involved in complaint handling.
- A record will be kept of all complaints received and their outcome.
- The Co-operative will publish information in relation to its complaint handling performance as part of its annual report.

11. Policy Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects best practice and to address legislative, regulatory or operational changes.

Approved by the Management Committee on	5th April 2022
Signature	
Position of Signatory	
For review on	5th April 2024