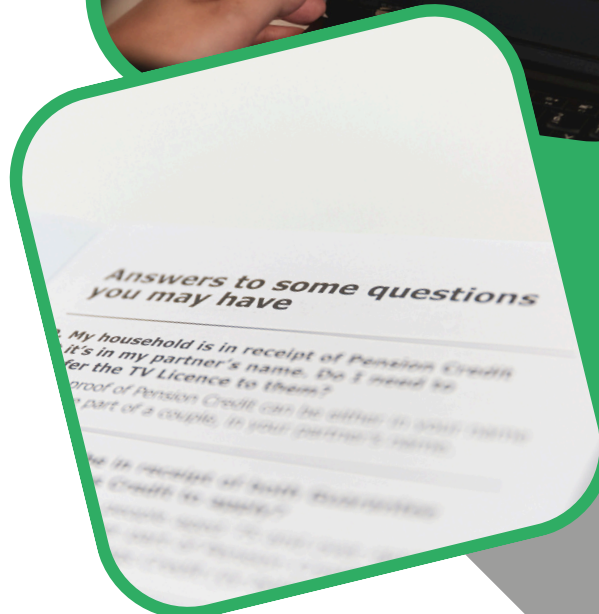




CHRISTCHURCH
HOUSING SOCIETY

COMPLAINTS

YOUR GUIDE TO MAKING A COMPLAINT



- 01202 483243
- www.christchurch-h-s.co.uk
- 96 Purewell, Christchurch,
Dorset, BH23 1EU

The aim of this booklet is to guide you through our complaints process including:

- How to report an issue or complaint
- What we will do when investigating an issue reported to us
- How to appeal a decision
- What we can do to put things right
- How we will deal with residents whose behaviour may be unreasonable

Christchurch Housing Society aims to provide applicants and residents with high-quality services, and we always try to get things right the first time. However, we appreciate that sometimes this doesn't happen, and mistakes are made.

We may not always know when there is a problem, so it helps to know where you think we can improve services. We continue to change the way we work as a result of learning from complaints and other feedback, and we appreciate the time you take to contact us if we do get it wrong.

This booklet gives you more information about what you can do if you think that Christchurch Housing Society, or our contractors, need to put things right. You can contact us by telephone, email, or by post if you want to discuss how to report an issue to us.

What is a complaint and what will happen if I want to make one?

When you report something to us with an expectation that we will deal with it, this is known as a 'service request'. It becomes a complaint if you are dissatisfied with the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by Christchurch Housing Society, our staff or those acting on our behalf, that affects you or other residents.

Where a complaint is made, we will continue to do everything we can to complete the original service request.

What is not a complaint?

We will consider complaints individually, and generally accept them unless there is a valid reason not to do so which will be explained in our response.

The reasons why we may not accept a complaint include:

- The issue that gives rise to the complaint occurred over 12 months ago.
- Legal proceedings have begun.
- The issue has already been considered under our Complaints Policy.
- Anonymous letters, although these may be investigated if they are a cause for concern.
- Reports of a nuisance or disputes between neighbours. These are dealt with through our AntiSocial Behaviour Policy.
- A complaint about a service where we have no responsibility, such as delays in processing benefit claims.
- A claim for damages that should be handle as an insurance claim.
- An expression of dissatisfaction made in response to a survey.

However, we will ensure that those taking part in the survey are made aware that they can make a complaint if they wish to.

How can I make a complaint?

You can raise a complaint with any member of our team. Complaints do not need to be in writing, and you can raise them in a range of ways:

- Call us on 01202 483243. Office hours are Monday - Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm.
- Write to us at the address provided on the front of this leaflet.
- Drop us an email, either at info@xhs.org.uk or via our website.
- If you meet a member of our team, either by appointment or when they are on site and have a complaint, please let them know.

If I make a complaint, how will it be handled?

Our complaints process has three stages: Stage 1 & Stage 2 and a referral to our complaints panel.

Stage 1

All complaints will be investigated at Stage 1, where dealing with the issue informally has not resolved the problem or where you have requested to make a complaint.

The complaint will be investigated by a manager responsible for the service being complained about, who hasn't been involved in dealing with the issue previously.

Your complaint will be acknowledged in two working days, advising who the investigating manager will be, details of Christchurch Housing Society's complaints policy and timescales for response.

You will be contacted by the investigating manager, normally by telephone, to discuss your complaint in more detail.

You will be asked to provide specific details of your complaint and how you would like us to resolve the issue. We need this information so that we are clear on all areas of your complaint, especially if it's in relation to more than one issue or the complaint is complex.

We also need to understand what you would like as an outcome of your complaint so that we can advise you about what we are able to do to resolve the issue.

You will receive a full written response within 10 working days of the complaint being made, or you will be contacted to advise a longer timescale is needed if the complaint is particularly complex. Where a longer timescale is necessary, this should not exceed a further 10 working days unless there is a good reason.

The investigating manager will keep in regular contact with you to provide updates in how they are progressing the issue.

Stage 2

If you remain unhappy with the response you received at Stage 1 you must let us know within 21 days of our response and we will review your complaint. You will need to advise us what it is you remain unhappy with and what you would like as an outcome to your complaint.

We will acknowledge the review of your complaint within 2 working days. We will arrange for a manager more senior to the investigating manager at Christchurch Housing Society to review the way in which your complaint was handled at Stage 1.

You will be contacted by this manager usually by telephone or by an in person meeting to discuss the complaint. They will need to understand why you're still unhappy and what you would like as an outcome. The manager will conduct the review and provide you with a written response of the outcome within 20 working days. If the review is likely to take longer you will be advised on a reasonable timescale for review. This should not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.

Stage 3 - Complaints Panel

If, following the outcome of Stage 2, you remain dissatisfied you can ask for your complaint to be referred to our Complaints Panel if:

- You feel that the decision is based on inaccurate facts that could change our decision.
- You have new and relevant information that was not previously available that could change our decision.
- We overlooked or misunderstood parts of the complaint or did not take account of relevant information, which could impact the decision.
- You believe that there is evidence that you have not been treated fairly, or in line with a policy or procedure.

If you feel that you would qualify for a Stage 3 Complaints Panel, you must set out your concerns to the Chief Executive within 28 days of the Stage 2 response date. Christchurch Housing Society reserves the right to turn down a request for a Stage 3 Complaints Panel in circumstances where:

- You have not provided any new evidence to support your request.
- The points you raise have already been considered at Stage 2.
- The points you raise would not lead to a change in the outcome of the findings at Stage 2.

The Panel will consist of two Committee members and when, in our opinion, possible and reasonable, an independent assessor. We will invite you, and/or your chosen representative to attend the Panel meeting at a mutually convenient date and time, though you do not have to attend if you would prefer not to.

We will ask you to let us know why you remain dissatisfied and what you feel we should do to put things right. The Panel will review the actions taken by our staff in dealing with your complaint at Stages 1 and 2 and will carefully consider your representations.

The Panel will send you a detailed response, within ten working days of the meeting, which will contain sufficient information to show that your complaint has been fully investigated. This will be our final response to you under our complaint's procedure.

If your complaint is upheld (i.e. the outcome of the review finds in your favour), you will receive an apology and, where appropriate, be given details of any action that we will take to remedy the situation or at least put things right for the future.

If your complaint is partially upheld (i.e. the outcome of the review finds in your favour, in part), you will receive an apology and explanation and, where appropriate, be given details of any action that we will take to remedy the situation, or at least put things right for the future.

If your complaint is not upheld (i.e. the outcome of the review does not find in your favour) you will be given an explanation.

At any stage of the process, independent mediation may be offered, where appropriate. The role of the mediator is to help both parties reach a solution to their problem and to arrive at an outcome that both are happy to accept.

Following the resolution of any complaint, we will ask you for your comments on how your complaint was handled.

We will inform residents on a regular basis, in our newsletter (without identifying you), of the nature of the complaints we have received and what we have done as a result.

Complaints about the Executive Team

If your complaint is about members of the Executive Team, a committee member will investigate and respond if the complaint is escalated to Stage 2. If your complaint is about the Chief Executive, the Chair of Committee will investigate and respond to the complaint at Stage 1.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome of the complaint at Stage 1, then you have the right to have your case escalated to the Complaints Panel. If you are still unhappy at the end of Christchurch Housing Society's complaints process, you can have your case reviewed by a member of Christchurch Housing Society's Committee.

Reasonable Adjustments

Throughout the complaints process, we will make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your needs in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This may include changes to the complaints policy, procedure, or process.

Learning from Complaints

We will publish our complaints performance, and any improvements made as a result of the complaints we receive annually in our newsletter. We invite residents who have had recent experience of our complaints process to scrutinise our complaints performance. This enables us to learn from their experiences and to improve our services.



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