

WICKHAM COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Approved: Dec 2011

Last reviewed: July 2024

Next review: May 2025 Then Annual Review in May

Available on WCLT website.

Objectives

WCLT wishes to make it easy for their tenants to register a complaint and we welcome the opportunity to address and resolve those concerns with minimal formality. Effective resolution will help us to:

1. Improve our service
2. Improve customer satisfaction and confidence
3. Identify strengths and weaknesses and help us to anticipate future problems.

Making a complaint does not mean that we will stop taking action on any repairs or other service requests while it is considered.

Definition of a Complaint

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

The term applies to a situation where the person making the complaint thinks that things have gone wrong. A request for service is not a complaint.

Examples of situations where a tenant might complain:

- When they think we have failed to carry out repairs to a satisfactory standard
- When WCLT has not done something we said we would do
- When they feel that WCLT has been unreasonable in the way in which we have handled a problem or situation.



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THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

STAGE 1: Making A Complaint

- 1.1 Complaints should be made as soon as possible after the event that gave rise to the complaint. Complaints made a year or more after the issue the complaint is about or the complainant has become aware of the issue, will not normally be considered.

You should outline the nature of your complaint giving as much detail as you can, including times, dates and any relevant names (if you know them) and what you would like done to remedy the situation.

You can do this by letter, phone, email, web contact form, in person at the Byrne Runciman Office (if you are a tenant) or when meeting with a CLT Board member. Our contact details are on this policy.

You can appoint a representative to make the complaint for you, or to accompany you to any meetings, if you wish.

- 1.2 The complaint will be recorded and an acknowledgement sent as soon as possible, normally within five working days of the recorded receipt, and we will indicate the date by which you can expect a full reply, normally within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged. The acknowledgement will set out what we understand the complaint to be about and, if specified, the remedy you want.

- 1.3 If we decide not to consider the complaint, or part of the complaint (if for example it is about something that happened too long ago, there are current legal proceedings, it has already been considered, or it relates to something that is not the responsibility of WCLT) we will let you know the reason why we are not considering it under the complaints process. You can take the matter up with the Ombudsman (see below) if you feel we should do.

- 1.4 The complaint will be investigated by a nominated Complaints Officer and our response to you will:

- address the issues raised in the complaint and might propose a solution
- explain what happened
- and/or offer an apology.

We will also explain how you can take the complaint further if you are not satisfied.

We may need more time to get further information, if so we will let you know and the reasons for this, normally this will be within 20 working days in total. If more time than that is required we will keep you updated on progress by agreement. In both cases you will be given the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman too, in case you feel this is unreasonable.

- 1.5 We will seek confirmation from you that:



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- you now consider the complaint resolved
- you do not wish to take the complaint forward
- you wish to take the complaint to the next stage.

If we do not hear from you within 28 working days of our response, we will consider the complaint closed. We may extend this if, for example, there is further repair work to be completed to remedy the complaint.



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STAGE 2

If you do not consider the complaint resolved you must let us know, with any additional information you wish to give us:

- 2.1 We will acknowledge your request to complain further within 5 working days of receiving the request.
- 2.2 We will arrange a meeting with you at a mutually convenient time, normally within 20 working days of your referring your complaint to Stage 2, between you (the tenant/complainant) and another representative of the WCLT board of trustees who was not involved in investigating the complaint.
- 2.3. If it is jointly agreed a meeting is not required, or you would prefer not to meet, then the Board Member will consider your concerns about the Stage 1 decision within 20 working days of receiving them.
- 2.4 Any discussion, decision and plan for action agreed at the meeting or proposed, if there is no meeting, will be recorded and a copy given to you (the tenant/complainant) within the 20 working day period. If more time is needed, we will let you know and the reason it is required. That should not normally be for more than a further 20 working days. If more time than that is required we will also keep you updated on progress by agreement. In both cases you will be given the contact details of the Housing Ombudsman too in case you feel this is unreasonable.
- 2.5 The WCLT complaint will then be closed, but you have the right to take the matter up with the Housing Ombudsman Service if you are not satisfied with the outcome.

WCLT COMPLAINTS OFFICER

This will usually be a member of our Board who is on our Housing Sub Committee and who is not the subject of the complaint.

WCLT MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLAINTS

This will be a Board member with specific policy responsibility for complaints. They will report to the board on complaints and any emerging issues and prepare the annual complaints performance and service improvement report. They will be responsible for liaison with the Housing Ombudsman.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

The WCLT Board will consider our complaints performance and service improvement issues annually. This will include:



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- Checking our policy is in line with the statutory code
- Reviewing the number and type of complaints received, any issues on how they were handled and service improvements that should be made
- Any findings of non compliance with the statutory code, reports about our performance or other relevant reports and publications from the Ombudsman.

The complaints performance and service improvement report will be published on our website.

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

Under the Housing Act of 1996 all registered social landlords have a duty to become members of any Ombudsman scheme approved by the Secretary of State. WCLT has willingly complied with this duty and will co-operate with any enquiry undertaken by the Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman issues a statutory Complaint Handling Code which WCLT follows.

The Ombudsman will investigate a complaint on your behalf but generally will not do so unless you have first exhausted this Complaints Procedure.

The Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool L33 7WQ

Telephone: 0300 111 3000
E-mail: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

CONTACTS FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT

By email: contact@wickhamclt.org.uk
By phone: 07491 674887
By letter: WCLT, PO Box 739, Fareham PO14 9RH
Through our website contact form: www.wickhamclt.org.uk
In person at the Byrne Runciman Office, The Square, Wickham (tenants only) - they will take details and pass the complaint onto Wickham CLT.

Related Policies

Monitoring and Review
Tenant Involvement Policy



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