

The Housing Ombudsman Service

The Housing Ombudsman service is set up by law to look at complaints about Housing Associations and Local Authorities that are registered with them. The Ombudsman are independent and are impartial and cannot complain on your behalf or represent you.

You can contact the Ombudsman at any point during the complaint process, the assistance they can offer depends on whether our complaints procedure has been completed and when.

If you have already complained to us, the Ombudsman can offer assistance with your complaint and discuss with you what outcomes and actions would put things right for you. If you have not seen the Groups complaints procedure please get in touch and we will send you a copy or direct you to the website where the policy and procedure are in full.

The Ombudsman can also assist with you receiving a response from us, they can contact us to find out if a formal complaint has been logged, they can make sure we understand that you want to make a complaint and ensure that we follow are process. They can also find out when you can expect to receive our response.

If you have received a response from us but you remain dissatisfied with the outcome the Ombudsman can discuss with you your options and help you identify the most appropriate action. This may be the next stage in our complaints process, unless you have been advised that our process has concluded.

What can't the Ombudsman help with?

There are some complaints the Ombudsman can't consider for example; if your complaint has been considered by a court. The Ombudsman will tell you as soon as possible if they are unable to consider any element of your complaint. Wherever possible they will sign post you to any organisation that may be able to assist and resolve your dispute.

Complaints process complete

In our final written response to you we will tell you that you can now refer your complaint to a designated person such as an MP, councillor or tenant panel, or you can wait 8 weeks and refer to the Ombudsman for investigation.

If we have not done this the Ombudsman can contact us to see if there is anything more we can do, if not they will inform you our complaints process has finished.

Why contact a designated person?

You're MP, local councillor or tenant panel may be able to help resolve the complaint. They may have knowledge and experience of local issues that can offer a solution. If they are unable to resolve the dispute they can refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for investigation. If you do not wish to contact a designated person you can refer your complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will be able to advise and consider your complaint at any time, they will not be able to investigate until eight weeks after we have given or final response.

What does the Ombudsman do with your complaint?

All complaints are different. Once the Ombudsman have had time to consider the individual circumstances of your complaint, they will decide the best way to resolve it. They may:

- Advise you to contact a different organisation if it is an issue that they are better placed to resolve. In some cases they may be able to refer the complaint directly to the other organisation if you want them to.
- Help you get a response from us and to progress the matter through our complaints process.
- Work with you and us to resolve the dispute through an agreement.
- Carry out an investigation into the way we have dealt with the initial problem and how we dealt with your complaint. They will assess whether this was fair in all circumstances by looking at all of the evidence.

How do you contact the Ombudsman?

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Write: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ