

All you need to know about...



making a complaint



The facts

The aim of this leaflet is to help tenants understand who to contact when making a complaint about local authority housing services and the procedure involved. A complaint is **not** reporting a repair or another housing issue. **Contact your landlord first.**

- *A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that is not able to get resolved at first contact.*
- You must have reported the original problem and are dissatisfied with the response.
- All councils have a formal complaints procedure which may differ slightly.
- There are timescales for each stage of the complaints process.
- If the council's complaints procedure **does not** resolve the complaint to the tenants' satisfaction the tenant has the right to take the complaint further to a *designated person*.
- There can be three types of designated person or persons; an MP, a local councillor, or your council **might** have a designated tenants' complaints panel.
- Tenants can refer themselves to a complaint to the Housing Ombudsman if either the:
 - 'designated person or persons' cannot help them, or
 - it has been at least 8 weeks after the end of the local authority complaints procedure.
- Non-housing complaints may not be dealt with by the housing department as these may be the responsibility of another department in the council.

What you need to do

- Make sure you read your landlord's complaints procedure and follow it.
- Check your landlord's service standards
- Information about service standards and complaints procedure will be available from your landlord, on their website and often in a leaflet in their reception area.
- Keep a record of dates, times and actions that you take.
- Provide any information requested to help with dealing with the complaint.

Help is available

- Contact your landlord for advice and guidance about their complaints procedure. They are there to help.
- Many landlords put information about how to complain on their websites, in tenants handbooks and in newsletters.
- The Housing Ombudsman website contains a range of useful information including a leaflet on how to make a complaint : <http://bit.ly/1jF5Z7t>
- The Chartered Institute of Housing and HouseMark have published a complaints charter setting out the outcomes that an effective complaints handling service can achieve –see www.cih.org/complaintscharter
- ‘Dispute Resolution Principles’ for both landlords and tenants. These can be used as a guide to making complaints more effectively. See: <http://bit.ly/1ieNK63>

Pass this leaflet onto neighbours, friends and family so they are aware of what they need to do if making a complaint and who to get help and support from.

Remember, don't be afraid to ask

Please let us know if the information given in this leaflet was useful and how it was used, just email info@arch-housing.org.uk

What is ARCH?

ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) is an association of councils in England who have retained ownership and management of their council homes. We're here to make sure that a positive future for all the local authorities who own their homes is secured.

What does the ARCH tenants' group do?

The 24 strong ARCH tenants' group is elected every other year from the ARCH membership of 64 councils across England. The group meet four times a year to discuss policy affecting council tenants nationally and represent the tenant's voice to the ARCH executive.

Contact info@arch-housing.org.uk for more information.



The Association of Retained Council Housing Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales - Company Reg. No. 07970258
4 Riley Court, Millburn Hill Road, University of Warwick Science Park,
Coventry CV4 7HP

www.arch-housing.org.uk

Twitter: @ARCH_housing

info@arch-housing.org.uk
