



Habinteg
housing association
(Ulster) Ltd

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE **for those using the Association's services**

Habinteg Housing Association [Ulster] Ltd [later referred to as “the Association”] is committed to providing its customers with a high standard of service at all times. However, the Association accepts that there may be occasions when you are not satisfied with the service, which you have received and, as a result, you may wish to make a formal complaint. There may also be situations where you feel that you wish to suggest improvements to the way in which we deliver our service.

The Association welcomes your comments and will use them to monitor performance standards, to promote accountability and to improve efficiency, introducing changes in the way we deliver our service where this is shown to be desirable.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly and in a professional manner by an appropriate member/members of staff. Confidentiality will be preserved as far as is possible, however, some complaints will require the involvement of third parties if they are to be properly investigated and in such cases, confidentiality cannot be strictly guaranteed.

Complaints relating to nuisance or harassment by neighbours will be dealt with separately, under the Association's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. A copy of the policy can be obtained from any of our offices.

A complaints form should be completed in the first instance, giving all the details which are relevant to your complaint. If you need help in completing the form please ask our office staff for assistance, or, alternatively, independent advice may be obtained from your local Citizens Advice Bureau, The Housing Rights Service, or other appropriate body. Those who do not wish to make a formal complaint may ask for their comments to be recorded so that all areas of concern may be addressed. **You should note, however, that we cannot deal with anonymous complaints.**

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Stage 1

The Association will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days and endeavour to provide a full reply within 15 working days. If the Association requires information from others in order to properly address your concerns this may take longer and we shall keep you advised of when you can expect a full reply.

Stage 2

Once you have received a full reply, if you are still unhappy you should write to the Chief Executive at the Association's Head Office. The Chief Executive will consider your complaint and provide a full reply within 15 working days.

Stage 3

If you remain dissatisfied after you have received the Chief Executive's response you may appeal to the Board of Management by writing to the Chairman, at the Association's Head Office. Members of the Board of Management give their services voluntarily. They are not based in the office and a complaint may need to be considered at their next meeting. The Chief Executive will write to you within 5 working days advising you when you should expect a full reply.

If, after investigation, it is established that we did not meet our standards or we failed to perform our duty, we shall apologise, offer an explanation and take steps to ensure that the same problem does not occur again.

If you suffer financial loss or disadvantage as a result of a failure on the part of the Association to meet its obligations you may be able to claim compensation. A copy of the procedure for compensation claims may be obtained from any of the Association's offices.

Tenants have a right to bring complaints about the Association's actions to the Commissioner for Complaints for Northern Ireland (The Ombudsman). His office can be contacted for advice on Freephone 0800343424 or by writing to The Ombudsman, Freepost BEL 1478 Belfast BT1 6BR. **It should be noted that the Ombudsman normally expects that a tenant will have used the Association's internal complaints procedure before bringing a complaint to him.**