

help us to improve

complaints are welcome here

help us learn

At times, things go wrong. When that happens, we want to work with you to put things right. All feedback helps us to identify areas where we can learn, so we can continually improve our services.

This leaflet tells you about:

- the stages before a complaint
- how to make a complaint
- the stages of the complaints process
- and how to seek impartial advice from the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS).

types of feedback

service request

When you tell us something has gone wrong *for the first time*, we respond to this feedback as a 'service request'. That means that there has been a problem with the service we've provided, and we try to resolve the issue as quickly as possible at your request.

If you remain unsatisfied with our service, that's when your feedback becomes a complaint.

neighbourhood issue

If you get in touch about a neighbourhood issue, such as anti-social behaviour, this is handled by our Neighbourhood team in the first place. However, if you're unhappy with how we've handled your neighbourhood issue, that's when a complaint can be raised.



report an issue

service request

- through the *MySoha* app
- call 01235 515 900 or 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone)
- email housing@soha.co.uk
- visit our office in Didcot

neighbourhood issue

- visit <https://soha.co.uk/2024/09/19/reporting-neighbourhood-issues/>
- through the *MySoha* app
- call 01235 515 900 or 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone)
- email housing@soha.co.uk
- visit our office in Didcot

make a complaint

Firstly, read page 2 to see what is and is not a complaint. There are various ways to make a complaint :

- go online to www.soha.co.uk/contact/complaints
- email complaints@soha.co.uk
- through the *MySoha* app
- call 01235 515 900 or 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone)
- visit our office in Didcot

types of complaint

complaints are...

Complaints are made when the services received, or the actions of Soha staff or contractors, were not good enough.

For example, if you were unhappy with our policies and procedures, and any decisions arising from them (including discrimination), this would be a complaint.

Similarly, allegations of bullying and discrimination by our staff and contractors are complaints and are taken very seriously.

Complaints can be made by:

- a Soha resident
- a group of Soha residents
- a person(s) who are not Soha residents but have been affected.

We will always try our best to resolve any issues when you first raise concerns, however, if you are dissatisfied with our response you can progress to our complaints process.

complaints are not...

- first-time reporting service requests
- neighbourhood issue reports, such as unwelcome or anti-social behaviour
- requests to re-open a concluded complaint, or to have a complaint reconsidered after the stage 2 final decision has been made.

If we decide that your issue should be dealt with by a more appropriate team (for example, anti-social behaviour reports by the Neighbourhood team) the full reason for this will be clearly explained.

A complaint

A failure or refusal to provide a service to you. If we did not act in line with our policies or timescales.

A delay in dealing with your enquiries or requests for service.

Negative treatment or attitude from Soha staff or contractors.

keeping it fair

The dedicated complaints team will ensure your complaint is treated in a timely, fair and unbiased way, in line with the Housing Ombudsman Service's Complaint Handling Code: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/the-code-2024. We self-assess our complaint handling compliance against the code each year. You can read this on our website: www.soha.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Soha-Complaint-Handling-Self-Assessment-23-24.pdf

You may contact the Housing Ombudsman at any time during the process for support, but they cannot help to resolve a dispute which is actively going through our formal process until a final decision has been made. Please see page 3 of this leaflet for how to contact the Ombudsman.

Any complaint to any organisation can be a draining experience, so please tell us if there's any additional support which you would find helpful throughout the process. It's important to us that everyone has the same service.

you don't have to make the complaint yourself

You can ask for someone to deal with the matter on your behalf, and we will be happy to work with them once you have given permission. We can also let you know where you might be able to find independent advice, for example from Citizens Advice (formerly CAB) or a housing advice centre. Please ask if you would like more information about this, or see our help in your local area page on the website: www.soha.co.uk/help-in-your-local-area.

Not a complaint

Telling us about a repair issue for the first time.

A report of unwelcome behaviour from a neighbour.

An issue that has already been dealt with through the complaints process within the last 6 months.

We will do our best to offer a translation service in a different language if this would be helpful. This may include using a translator to speak to you about the content of a publication rather than giving you a hard copy of your own. We also do our best to offer large print or audio versions of publications. Contact us via the details on the front.

complaints timeline

Every housing association has a 2-stage process, which is handled internally.

stage 1

If we can resolve your complaint quickly, we will contact you within **5 working days** after your initial complaint has been made. We will let you know what has happened, and what action we've taken.

If the complaint is more complex and requires further investigation, we will acknowledge your complaint **within 5 working days** and our Complaints team will **use the next 10 working days** to investigate and respond.

If exceptional circumstances mean we are unable to give you a response within these timelines, we can extend the timeline for our response by a further **10 working days** – but we will always let you know if this is the case and tell you the reason.

At the end of stage 1, we will send you written confirmation of the outcome.

If you remain unhappy, please contact the Complaints team as soon as possible to tell us why, and we will continue working together.

You can choose to progress to stage 2 of our complaints process if you are still dissatisfied.



stage 2

Stage 2 is a review of stage 1 rather than a new investigation, to ensure it was fair, reasonable and in line with our policies and procedures.

At this point, the Complaints team will ask:

- why you remain dissatisfied
- what resolution you are seeking.

Within 5 working days, we will acknowledge your request and invite you to give any new and relevant information not previously considered.

A panel made up of 1 member of the Senior Leadership team and 1 member of the Complaints team, not directly involved with the initial complaint, will then review the stage 1 response and evidence.

Within 20 working days of our acknowledgement, we will send you our final response.

Very occasionally we are unable to give you a response within these timelines. If this is the case, we can extend the timeline for our response by a further **20 working days** – but we will always let you know the new timeline, and the reason why it has changed. Complex cases may take a maximum of **40 working days**.

Stage 2 is the final part of our formal complaints process. If you are unhappy with the final decision, you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service for impartial review.

housing ombudsman service (HOS)

The Ombudsman aims to resolve disputes involving tenants and leaseholders of social landlords. This means the HOS is available only to residents. The service is free, independent, and impartial.

The HOS will only consider a complaint once it has gone through the Soha formal complaints process. However, you can ask for their guidance at any time.

You can contact the HOS at:

Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET
Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

You can download a copy of the HOS complaints form at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

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complaints timeline

stage 1



stage 2

