Drumchapel Housing Co-operative Limited

Complaints Handling Procedure

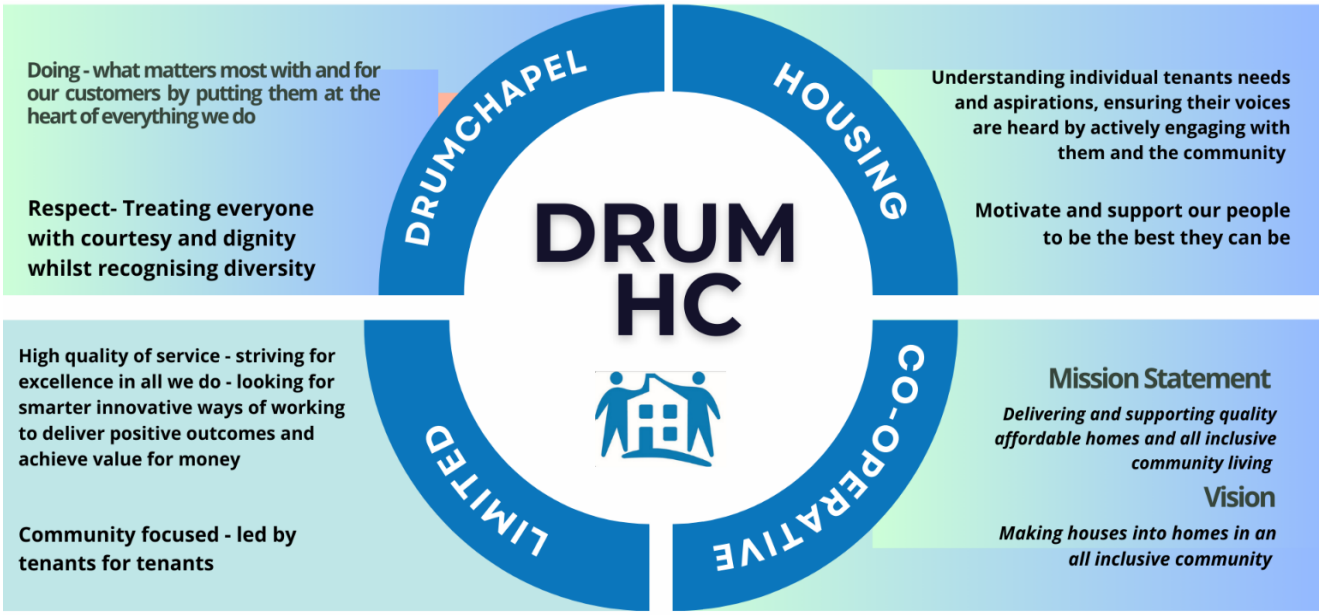
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SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN
People Centred Improvement Focused

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Vision and Values



Equality and Human Rights Statement

Drumchapel Housing Co-operative are committed to ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; sex or sexual orientation. This document complies with our Equality and Human Rights Policy.

Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring our policies and documents are accessible to everyone. If you require this document in an alternative format, or need support to access its contents, please contact the office and reasonable adjustments will be made

Privacy Statement

Drumchapel Housing Co operative's Data Protection Policy outlines how the organisation lawfully, fairly, and securely manages personal data in line with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK Data Use and Access Act 2025, and PECR. It sets out responsibilities for staff and management, requirements for accurate and minimal data collection, rules on data sharing and processor oversight, procedures for managing data breaches, and the rights of individuals over their personal information. The policy emphasises security, accountability, data protection by design, regular training, and ongoing monitoring to ensure continued compliance.

1. Introduction

Drumchapel Housing Co-operative is committed to providing excellent services. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. If something goes wrong or you are dissatisfied with our services, please tell us. This document describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint. It also tells you about how we will handle your complaint and what you can expect from us.

This procedure adopts both the internal Complaints Handling Procedure and the customer-facing Complaints Handling Procedure required by the SPSO Model Complaints Handling Procedure for registered social landlords.

2. Purpose and Aims

Since 2012 the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) has worked closely with a range of partners and stakeholders to develop and implement Model Complaints Handling Procedures (MCHP) for each public service sector.

All organisations within SPSO's jurisdiction, including housing providers, must ensure their complaints handling procedure complies with the current SPSO Statement of Complaints Handling Principles, (Appendix 2) approved by the Scottish Parliament in June 2025.

The 2025 principles set out how organisations and their staff should handle complaints in order to develop and maintain a positive complaints handling culture based on respect, transparency, accountability and learning.

The aim of standardising and streamlining complaints handling procedures has been at the core of this work, with the key elements of each MCHP including:

- *A shared definition of what is and what is not a complaint*
- *A two-stage process where complaints are resolved, with the customer's agreement, as close to the frontline as possible (though resolution can happen at any stage of the process)*
- *Frontline response to complaints within five working days*
- *An investigation stage of 20 working days, which provides the Co-operative's final decision*
- *Recording of all complaints*
- *Active learning from complaints through reporting and publicising complaints information.*

The SPSO's 2025 Statement of Complaints Handling Principles requires complaint handling to be: person-centred; accessible; simple and timely; thorough, proportionate, consistent and effective; objective, impartial and fair; focused on resolution; and used to learn and improve. These principles should be reflected both in this procedure and in how we respond to complaints in practice.

Person-centred and rights-based complaints handling means welcoming complaints

and ensuring that people feel heard, respected and valued throughout the complaints process. We will recognise and respond to people's different needs as far as possible and appropriate, make the procedure clearly communicated and easy to access, respond promptly, explain decisions clearly, seek resolution wherever possible, and use complaints information to improve our services.

3.1 What is a complaint?

At Drumchapel Housing Co-operative, we regard a complaint as:

"any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf."

3.2 What can I complain about?

You can complain about things like:

- failure or refusal to provide a service
- inadequate quality or standard of service, or an unreasonable delay in providing a service
- delays in responding to enquiries or requests
- unfairness, bias or prejudice in service delivery
- lack of provision, or the provision of misleading, unsuitable or incorrect advice or information
- a repair that has not been carried out properly or in an agreed timeframe
- dissatisfaction with one of our policies or its impact on the individual
- failure to properly apply law, procedure or guidance when delivering services
- failure to follow the appropriate administrative process
- conduct, treatment by or attitude of a member of staff or contractor (**except** where there are arrangements in place for the contractor to handle the complaint themselves); or
- disagreement with a decision, (**except** where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision, or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector).

Your complaint may involve more than one Drumchapel Housing Co-operative service or be about someone working on our behalf.

3.3 What can't I complain about?

There are some things we can't deal with through our complaints handling procedure. These include:

- a routine first-time request for a service

- a request for compensation only
- issues that are in court or have already been heard by a court or a tribunal (if you decide to take legal action, you should let us know as the complaint cannotthen be considered under this process)
- disagreement with a decision where there is a statutory procedure for challenging that decision (such as for freedom of information and subject access requests), or an established appeals process followed throughout the sector
- a request for information under the Data Protection or Freedom of Information (Scotland) Acts
- a grievance by a staff member or a grievance relating to employment or staff recruitment
- a concern raised internally by a member of staff (which was not about a servicethey received, such as a whistleblowing concern)
- a concern about a child or an adult's safety
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision
- abuse or unsubstantiated allegations about our organisation or staff
- a concern about the actions or service of a different organisation, where we have no involvement in the issue (**except** where the other organisation is delivering services on our behalf).

If other procedures or rights of appeal can help you resolve your concerns, we will give information and advice to help you.

3.4 Who can complain?

Anyone who receives, requests or is directly affected by our services can make a complaint to us. This includes the representative of someone who is dissatisfied with our service (for example, a relative, friend, advocate or adviser). If you are making a complaint on someone else's behalf, you will normally need their written consent. Please also read the section on Getting help to make your complaint below.

3.5 How do I complain?

You can complain in person to our office, by phone, in writing, by email or by using our complaints form which is available on our website. It is easier for us to address complaints if you make them quickly and directly to the service concerned. So please talk to a member of our staff at the service you are complaining about. Then they can try to resolve the issue.

When complaining, please tell us:

- your full name and contact details
- as much as you can about the complaint
- what has gone wrong; and

- what outcome you are seeking.

4. Our contact details

Drumchapel Housing Co-operative Limited
4 Kinclaven Avenue
Drumchapel
Glasgow G15 7SP
Tel: 0141 944 4902
E mail: enquiries@drumchapelhc.org.uk
Website: www.drumchapelhc.org.uk

5. How long do I have to make a complaint?

Normally, you must make your complaint within six months of:

- the event you want to complain about; or
- finding out that you have a reason to complain.

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a complaint after the timelimit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

6. What happens when I have complained?

We will always tell you who is dealing with your complaint. Our complaints procedure has two stages.

Stage 1: Frontline response

We aim to respond to complaints quickly (where possible, when you first tell us about the issue). This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem.

We will give you our decision at stage 1 in five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you are not satisfied with the response we give at this stage, we will tell you what you can do next. If you choose to, you can take your complaint to stage 2. You must normally ask us to consider your complaint at stage 2 either:

- within six months of the event, you want to complain about or finding out thatyou have a reason to complain; or
- within two months of receiving your stage 1 response (if this is later).

In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to accept a stage 2 complaint afterthe time limit. If you feel that the time limit should not apply to your complaint, please tell us why.

Stage 2: Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: where the customer remains dissatisfied after stage 1 and those that clearly require investigation, and so are handled directly at this stage. If you do not wish your complaint to be handled at stage 1, you can ask us to handle it at stage 2 instead.

When using stage 2:

- we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within three working days
- we will confirm our understanding of the complaint we will investigate and what outcome you are looking for
- we will try to resolve your complaint where we can (in some cases we maysuggest using an alternative complaint resolution approach, such as mediation); and
- where we cannot resolve your complaint, we will give you a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days.

If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will tell you. We will tell you our revised time limits and keep you updated on progress.

7. What if I'm still dissatisfied?

After we have given you our final decision, if you are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with your complaint, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it.

The SPSO are an independent organisation that investigates complaints. They are not an advocacy or support service (but there are other organisations who can help you with advocacy or support).

You can ask the SPSO to look at your complaint if:

- you have gone all the way through the Co-operative's complaints handling procedure
- it is less than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you wantto complain about; and
- the matter has not been (and is not being) considered in court.

The SPSO will ask you to complete a complaint form and provide a copy of ourfinal response to your complaint. You can do this online at

www.spso.org.uk/complain/form or call them on Freephone 0800 377 7330.

You may wish to get independent support or advocacy to help you progress your complaint. See the section on **Getting help to make your complaint** below.

The SPSO's contact details are:

SPSO
Bridgeside House
99 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS
(if you would like to visit in person, you must make an appointment first)

Their freepost address is:

FREEPOST SPSO
Freephone: 0800377 7330
Online contact:
www.spso.org.uk/contact-us
Website: www.spso.org.uk

There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

8. Reporting a Serious Concern

The Scottish Housing Regulator expect social landlords to make it easy for tenants and other service users to talk to them and get the information they need about the service they provide and decisions they make. Sometimes you might have a problem with a social landlord. The role of the Scottish Housing Regulator **does not allow them to deal with individual complaints**. So, if you have a complaint about Drumchapel Housing Co-operative that relates to you or your home, you should:

- **Step 1:** Follow the complaints procedure **in full**
- **Step 2:** If the complaints procedure ends and you are unhappy with how your complaint was dealt with, or you have tried but have been unable to complete the complaints procedure, you can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

If your complaint is upheld by the SPSO, the Scottish Housing Regulator may be made aware where the outcome identifies a wider regulatory concern.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) can consider issues raised with them about serious concerns or a 'significant performance failure', defined as something that a landlord does or fails to do that puts the interests of its tenants at risk, and which the

landlord has not resolved. This is something that is a systemic problem that does, or could, affect all of a landlord's tenants. If you are affected by a problem like this, you should first report it to us. If you have told us about it but we have not resolved it, you can report it directly to the SHR.

The SHR also has more information on their website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/

Complaints and serious concerns - information for tenants and service users of social landlords - December 2025 | Scottish Housing Regulator

9. Getting help to make your complaint

We understand that you may be unable or reluctant to make a complaint yourself. We accept complaints from the representative of a person who is dissatisfied with our service. We can take complaints from a friend, relative, or an advocate, if you have given them your consent to complain for you.

You can find out about advocates in your area by contacting the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance:

- **Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance**

  Tel: 0131 510 9410 Website: **www.siaa.org.uk**

You can find out about advisers in your area through Citizens Advice Scotland:

- **Citizens Advice Scotland**

Website: **www.cas.org.uk** or check your phone book for your local citizensadvice bureau.

We are committed to making our service easy to use for all members of the community. In line with our equalities' duties, we will always ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to help you access and use our services. If you need any help, or want this information in another language or format, such as large font, or Braille, please tell us in person, contact us on 0141 944 4902 or email us at enquiries@drumchapelhc.org.uk

10. Roles and Responsibilities

All Drumchapel Housing staff will be aware of:

- the Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP)
- how to handle and record complaints at the frontline response stage
- who they can refer a complaint to, in case they are not able to handle the matter
- the need to try and resolve complaints early and as close to the point of service delivery as possible; and

- their clear authority to attempt to resolve any complaints they may be called upon to deal with.

Training on this procedure will be part of the induction process for all new staff. Refresher training will be provided for current staff on a regular basis.

11. Recording Complaints

Complaints provide us with valuable customer feedback. One of the aims of the CHP is to identify opportunities to improve services across the Co-operative. By recording and analysing complaints data, we can identify and address the causes of complaints and, where appropriate, identify training opportunities and introduce service improvements.

We also have arrangements in place to ensure complaints about contractors are recorded, reported on and publicised in line with this CHP.

It is important that we record suitable data to enable us to fully investigate and respond to the complaint, as well as using our complaint information to track themes and trends. As a minimum, we will record:

- the customer's name and contact details
- the date the complaint was received
- the nature of the complaint
- the service the complaint refers to
- staff member responsible for handling the complaint
- action taken and outcome at frontline response stage
- date the complaint was closed at the frontline response stage
- date the investigation stage was initiated (if applicable)
- action taken and outcome at investigation stage (if applicable)
- date the complaint was closed at the investigation stage (if applicable); and
- the underlying cause of the complaint and any remedial action taken.

If the customer does not want to provide any of this information, we will reassure them that it will be managed appropriately, and record what we can.

Individual complaint files will be stored in line with our document retention policy.

12. Learning from complaints

We have a clear system in place to act on issues identified in complaints. As a minimum, we must:

- seek to identify the root cause of complaints
- take action to reduce the risk of recurrence; and
- systematically review complaints performance reports to improve service delivery.

Learning may be identified from individual complaints (regardless of whether the complaint is upheld or not) and from analysis of complaints data.

Where we have identified the need for service improvement in response to an individual complaint, we will take appropriate action. We will publish complaints that are relevant to all customers and what we have done in response. We meet as a team to discuss complaints on a weekly basis and agree on the following:

- the action needed to improve services must be authorised by an appropriate manager
- an officer (or team) will be designated the 'owner' of the issue, with responsibility for ensuring the action is taken
- a target date must be set for the action to be taken
- the designated individual must follow up to ensure that the action is taken within the agreed timescale
- where appropriate, performance in the service area should be monitored to ensure that the issue has been resolved; and
- any learning points should be shared with relevant staff.

Senior management will review the information reported on complaints regularly to ensure that any trends or wider issues which may not be obvious from individual complaints are quickly identified and addressed. Where we identify the need for service improvement, we will take appropriate action (as set out above). Where appropriate, performance in the service area should be monitored to ensure that the issue has been resolved.

13. Reporting of complaints

We have a process for the internal reporting of complaints information, including analysis of complaints trends to the Housing and Maintenance Sub-Committee. Regularly reporting the analysis of complaints information helps to inform management of where services need to improve.

We will report at least quarterly to the Sub-Committee and Board annually on:

- performance statistics, in line with the complaint's performance indicators published by SPSO
- analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints (this should include highlighting where there are areas where few or no complaints are received, which may indicate either good practice or that there are barriers to complaining in that area).

14. Publicising complaints information

We publish on a quarterly basis information on complaints outcomes and actions taken to improve services within our newsletter 'you said, we did' and on our website.

This demonstrates the improvements resulting from complaints and shows that

complaints can help to improve our services. It also helps ensure transparency in our complaints handling service and will help to show our customers that we value their complaints.

We will publish an annual complaints performance report on our website in line with SPSO requirements and provide this to the SPSO on request. This summarises and builds on the quarterly reports we have produced about our services. It includes:

- performance statistics, in line with the complaint's performance indicators published by the SPSO; and
- complaint trends and the actions that have been or will be taken to improve services as a result.

These reports are easily accessible to members of the public on our website and available in alternative formats as requested.

15. Policy Review

This document will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis unless required earlier due to changes to the MCHP from the SPSO.

Appendix 1 Quick Guide to Complaints

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by email or in writing. We have **a two-stage complaints procedure**. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need investigation, wewill tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1: Frontline response

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can.

If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider yourcomplaint at stage 2.

Stage 2: Investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they need investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days.**

We will confirm the points of complaint to be investigated and what you want toachieve.

We will investigate the complaint and give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** *unless* there isclearly a good reason for needing more time.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it.
There are some complaints about housing that have an alternative route for independent review. We will tell you how to seek independent review when we give you our final response on your complaint.

Appendix 2 SPSO Complaints Handling Principles

https://www.spso.org.uk/sites/spso/files/standards/ComplaintsPrinciples.pdf