

## **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

### **1. Why have a complaints Procedure?**

Loretto Housing Association aims to provide a first class service but there may be occasions when you're not happy about something, and if this is the case it is important for you to tell us.

Loretto Housing Association follows the performance standard relating to Complaints Procedures which states that

“RSL’s should have fair, effective and well publicized procedure by which anyone can appeal or complain about any of their activities. The procedure should make it clear that ultimately the complainant can go to the Public Services Ombudsman for Scotland, so long as the Complaint comes within the Ombudsman’s terms of reference”

The aim of the complaints procedure is to give you clear details of what steps you can take to try and get things put right when there's a problem.

The Complaints Procedure also gives us the chance to keep an eye on the quality of service we provide so that we can continually work to improve it.

### **2. Who can use the Complaints Procedure?**

Anyone who receives or requests a service from Loretto Housing Association can use the complaints procedure. This includes tenants, people applying for housing, owners or sharing owners and people living in neighbouring property.

The procedure is also open to people who may be acting on your behalf, such as a Councillor, Member of Parliament, advice agency or solicitor (it will be encouraged that problems be solved with Loretto in the first instance).

If you belong to a tenants' group or residents' association and would prefer to ask them to help you complain we will be happy for them to contact us on your behalf.

### **3. What can you complain about?**

You can complain about any aspect of our service that you are unhappy about, for example:

- If a repair has not been carried out properly
- If you have not received information you have asked for
- If you feel that a member of staff, committee member, or contractor has not behaved reasonably towards you
- If you feel your housing application has not been handled properly
- If you feel you have been unfairly discriminated against

Complaints against neighbours will be dealt with under our Anti – Social Behaviour Policy. However, if you have a complaint about the way we have dealt with a neighbour dispute, then you can use the Complaints Procedure.

We will always try to deal with complaints sympathetically, but some things we will not be able to give you information about. For example, we are not able to breach another individual's confidentiality.

#### **4. Trying to resolve a problem informally**

You have every right to make a formal complaint whenever you wish to, but in the first instance, it can often be quicker and easier for everyone if the problem can be resolved informally; the choice is yours.

To try and resolve a problem informally, the best thing for you to do is talk to (or write to) your Housing Officer or Senior Housing Officer if this is appropriate, and let him/her know what you would like to be put right. He or she will let you know how long it should take for the problem to be resolved, and hopefully a solution will be reached.

If you live in sheltered housing, you may be happy to try and resolve things informally by letting the warden know what the problem is. He/she will let you know how long it will be before the problem can be sorted out. However, if you do not feel comfortable about involving the warden you should contact the Housing Officer or Senior Housing Officer.

If you feel that your complaint cannot be resolved informally or you are unhappy with the response at this stage, you can make a more formal complaint to the Association.

#### **5. The Formal Complaints Procedure**

If the problem has not been resolved informally, you should in the first instance complain to the Senior Housing Officer at Loretto Housing Association, FREEPOST GW 7602, Glasgow, G5 9XD. If you have a complaint against a member of staff you should write to the Head of Housing Services. Complaints about the Director of Operations should be sent to the Chair of the Management Committee.

## **6. How to make a formal complaint**

When you make a formal complaint to Loretto Housing Association, you can do this by putting your complaint in writing or asking us for a Complaints Form (Appendix 1). If this is not suitable, let us know how best you can express the problem. If you make a complaint over the telephone, please make sure that you have the name of the member of staff who is taking your complaint and check they have the details correct. You will normally be asked to sign your complaint, this way everyone is clear on what the complaint is about.

Please let us know exactly what the problem is, who is involved and when the complaint arose. Also let us know how you would like to see the problem resolved.

## **7. What happens to your Formal Complaint**

When Loretto receive your formal complaint, we will acknowledge it in writing within three working days. This letter (appendix 2) should let you know who is dealing with your complaint and when you can expect a response from them. If there has been a delay in dealing with your complaint, it should be explained to you in writing.

A response to your formal complaint should be issued within two working weeks of receiving your complaint.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you can use the appeals procedure.

## **8. Taking your complaint further – The Appeals Procedure**

If you feel that staff have not resolved your complaint satisfactorily, you can appeal to the Associations Management Committee, explaining why you are unhappy with the original decision. Although it is this Committee which is responsible for considering your appeal, it may pass this task to a complaints sub - committee.

Complaints of a very serious nature may be dealt with by the full committee of the Association.

The Chair of the Management Committee will acknowledge your letter within three working days of receiving your complaint, explaining how and when the complaint will be dealt. The Committee will decide how to deal with your complaint and whether to hold a hearing or not. The Chair will write to you within three working days of the meeting to let you know of the

outcome. If you are unhappy with the outcome of the appeal/hearing, you can take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## **9. Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman provides a free and impartial complaints system. Complaints can be made about Housing Associations to the Ombudsman.

You can contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman in a number of ways:

- By writing to:-

4 Melville Street	Freepost EH641
Edinburgh	Edinburgh
EH3 7NS	EH3 0BR
- By Telephoning:- 0870 011 5378
- By Faxing:- 0870 011 5379
- By e-mailing:- [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk)

## **10. Who will know about my complaint**

We will as far as possible respect the confidentiality of your complaint. Whilst we are looking into your complaint your name will not be divulged any more than is necessary within the association, and if your complaint goes to the Chair of the Management Committee then other committee members will not be told who has complained.

You will appreciate, however, that if your complaint involves another tenant or a member of staff it may be very difficult for us to look into this without talking to that tenant or staff member.

## **11. Getting independent advice**

If you feel that you require independent advice in order to deal with your complaint, you can seek that in Citizens Advice Bureaus', Law Centres etc. Information on Independent Advice is available from this office (Appendix 3).

## **12. How do we record and monitor complaints**

Complaints can also help Loretto Housing Association. We monitor all formal complaints as they can help us improve our service (appendix 4).

When your formal complaint arrives at the Association, we will record your information and the nature of complaint you have made. This will be reported to the Director of Operations. Monitoring of your complaint will continue through to the outcome and any action that will be taken as a result of your complaint.

The Director of Operations will let the Management Committee know of any changes or improvements the Association may be taking as a result of the complaints received.

**Complaints Form**

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>Postcode</b>	
<b>Tel No</b>	

**Please use this space to describe the nature of your complaint, giving dates and names of anyone involved in the complaint. Please include what action you would like to see taken:-**

Large empty rectangular box for content.

**Signed By:**

**Date:**

For Office use only

## Tracking

Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Tel No	
Date Rec'd	
Ack Sent	
Decision Sent	
Category	