

CLYDE VALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

82-84 Brandon Parade East
Motherwell ML1 1LY

Telephone: 01698 268855

Fax: 01698 266271

Opening Times

Monday – Thursday 9 am to 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm to 5 pm

Friday 9 am to 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

16 Gateside Street
Hamilton
ML3 7JG

Telephone: 01698 428426

Fax: 01698 428289

Opening Times

Monday - Friday 9 am to 12.30 pm and 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

1 Islay Way
Coatbridge
ML5 5 DX

Telephone: 01236 425589

Fax: 01236 430349

Opening times

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

E-mail: cvha@cvha.org.uk

Complaints Policy



tenant or member of staff, we will try and respect this, but it will probably not be possible for us to take any action to sort out the problem.

It will normally be impossible for us to deal with anonymous complaints, as it is difficult for us to check things with the person making the complaint.

Getting independent advice

We always hope that a problem can be sorted out informally. However, you may feel that it is important for you to get independent advice before you decide whether to make a formal complaint. You can get independent advice from the following organisations and agencies.

- Welfare Rights Service
- Citizens Advice
- Law centres
- Solicitors

The addresses and phone numbers of some of these organisations are available from reception at our offices.

How do you record and monitor complaints?

Complaints can help us as well as you. All complaints we receive are recorded and reported to the board of management, together with any changes or improvements we plan to make as a result of the complaint.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman investigates individual complaints against housing associations and co-operatives. This is a free and unbiased service, and you can get a leaflet about it from our office.

The service is available to anyone who receives a service from a housing association or co-operative, or who has applied to one for housing. Normally, you must have gone through the association's own complaints procedure before the Ombudsman can deal with your complaint.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman is based at:

4 Melville Street Telephone: 0870 011 5378
Edinburgh Fax: 0870 011 4379
EH3 7NS E-mail: enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk

Why we have a complaints procedure

We aim to give you the best possible service, but there may be times when you are not happy about something. And if this is the case, it is important you tell us.

Who can use the complaints procedure?

Anyone who receives or asks for a service from us can use the complaints procedure. This includes tenants, people applying for housing, homeowners and people living in neighbouring properties.

The procedure is also open to people who may be acting on your behalf, such as a councillor, MP, advice agency or solicitor. However, as you will see later, we do encourage you to try to sort things out with us first.

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.

What can I complain about?

You can complain about any part of our service which you are not happy 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, a board member or a contractor has not behaved reasonably towards you;
- if you feel your housing application has not been handled properly; or
- if you feel you have been unfairly discriminated against.

We will try to deal with all your complaints, but there are some things we will not be able to give you information about. For example, it would be wrong for us to discuss with you the details of someone else's housing application, as we would be breaking the confidentiality agreement we have in place. We can, however, talk to you about how our allocations procedure works.

Trying to sort things out informally – stage 1

You have every right to make a formal complaint whenever you want to, but it can often be quicker and easier for everyone if we can sort out the problem informally.

To try and sort out a problem informally, the best thing for you to do is to talk to your housing officer or the area manager of your local office and let them know what you would like to be put right. They will let you know how long it should take for the problem to be sorted out.

Most complaints we receive can be classed as informal and are generally sorted out by the individual officer who the complaint is first raised with. Sometimes, however, the complaint will not be sorted out to either your or our satisfaction, for example if:

- *you feel that you need a new window or door but we only feel it is necessary to repair that window or door;*
- or
- *you have complained about your neighbour and feel that we should have evicted them. However, we may feel we have dealt with the matter well enough by interviewing you and sending a warning letter to your neighbour.*

In these cases, you and we will agree that, although we have dealt with the matter, we have not put it right in the way you originally wanted.

The formal complaints procedure – stage 2

We are confident that problems can be sorted out informally at our local office. As a result, we will, at first, refer all complaints to the local office, even if they have been sent to other parts of the organisation. However, if you are not happy with the response from our local office, you should complain by writing to **Clyde Valley Housing Association, 82-84 Brandon Parade East, Motherwell, ML1 1LY** or by phoning **01698 268855**. If appropriate, you should complain to a member of the management team, for example, the Chief Executive, the housing services manager, technical services manager, project services manager or finance manager, depending on what your complaint is about.

When you complain, it is important to let us know exactly what the problem is and how you would like us to sort it out. We encourage you to do this, in writing, whenever possible. If this is not easy, you can complain by phone or in person to the appropriate senior staff member. If they are not

available, the person you speak to will make a note of it and pass it on to the relevant senior staff member.

If you have complained, we will check with you that we recorded it correctly. In this way, everyone is clear about the nature of your grievance.

Whether you have complained in writing, by phone or in person, we will write to you straight away to acknowledge that we are dealing with your complaint and tell you that we will let you know the outcome within two weeks. Please remember that some things may not be within our control and may take longer to sort out.

Taking your complaint further – stage 3

If you do not feel that the management team member has sorted out your complaint satisfactorily, you can appeal to our board of management and ask them to review your complaint.

To do this, you must appeal in writing once you have received the reply from the management team member. Your appeal will be referred to the board of management, who will appoint an appropriate committee (for example, the Housing Management and Maintenance Committee) to review your complaint.

The board of management will send you their decision in writing within **five working days** of the committee meeting to review your complaint. They will also send you details about taking your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

If you still feel that your complaint has not been sorted out satisfactorily, you can appeal, in writing, to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (the address is at the end of this leaflet). However, the Ombudsman will only investigate your complaint if you have gone through all the stages of our own complaints procedure.

Who will know about my complaint?

We will, as far as possible, respect the confidentiality of your complaint. While we are looking into your complaint, we will not give out your name within our organisation any more than is absolutely necessary. However, you will appreciate that if your complaint involves another tenant or member of staff it may be very difficult for us to look into it without talking to that tenant or member of staff. If you ask us not to talk to the