



Complaints Policy

Sapphire Independent Housing deems a complaint to be

An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

When should I complain?

Our complaints procedure is intended for those times you feel we have failed to deliver what we should. If our service falls short, you should make a complaint.

A complaint may be made because Sapphire Independent Housing has:

- Provided a poor service or failed to provide a service at all.
- Failed to do something that we have an obligation to do.
- Taken too long to deal with a request.
- A member of Sapphire Independent Housing's staff have behaved unhelpfully, inappropriately or discourteously.
- Policies and procedure that are wholly unfair or inappropriate.

When not to use the complaints procedure

The complaints procedure should not be used for the following:

- To request a service e.g. for maintenance work to be carried out.
- To report anti-social behaviour
- To complain about things outside of the control of Sapphire Independent Housing e.g. move-on availability.
- Legal claims
- Appeals by clients against warnings, notices to quit or evictions.

Sapphire Independent Housing complaints procedure does not cover:

- Complaints submitted six months or more after the issue has occurred and it is being brought to Sapphire Independent Housing's attention for the first time. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of scheme managers.

How to make a complaint

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to let us know if you feel something has gone wrong with our service. Therefore complaints can be made in any of following ways:

- **Online:** via our compliments/complaints and suggestions form, located in the residents section at: www.sih.org
- **Writing a letter:** giving it to a member of staff at your scheme or sending it to head office
- **Email:** a member of staff directly or via info@sih.org
- **Verbally:** by speaking directly to a member of staff

- **Compliments/complaints/suggestions form**: All reception areas and head office have clearly accessible complaints forms for residents to complete and place in your designated feedback boxes.
- **Representative or advocate**: All residents can choose a representative or advocate to speak on their behalf.

At the time of publishing this policy, the Housing Ombudsman offered online tools and videos to support residents to make a complaint: <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/>

Sapphire Independent Housing encourages residents to say what actions they feel would resolve their complaint, however, we cannot guarantee these actions will be met.

Anonymous complaints are treated as seriously and within the same timescales as other complaints. They will be investigated through the same process as complaints from specified sources up to stage one of the procedure and will be recorded as an anonymous complaint.

Reasonable adjustments

Sapphire Independent Housing is committed to The Equality Act 2010 and improving the accessibility of our complaints procedure. As there is not a specific and prescribed list of reasonable adjustments, we will discuss the needs with the person concerned and aim to reach an agreement on what may be reasonable.

We will consider adjustments by way of a physical change to premises or to work practices to avoid or correct the disadvantage to a person with a disability. This may include:

- Allowing more time than usual to provide information that we need
- The provision of specialist equipment or additional support such as a sign language interpreter for a workshop or event.

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint can be made by a resident, their advocate or a group of residents who believes that Sapphire Independent Housing has failed to provide a service on time or to the standard we promised.

When a complaint may be refused

In exceptional circumstances Sapphire Independent Housing may refuse to deal with a complaint. Such circumstances include:

- If a complaint is about a matter that has already been considered under Sapphire's complaints procedure. If you are unhappy with the outcome of your original complaint and it has been investigated via Sapphire Independent Housing's complaints procedure you have the right to refer the issue to your local councillor or Member of Parliament or

directly to the Housing Ombudsman.

- Where a complaint is persistent or unreasonable
- Where the complainant or their advocate has been abusive or threatening to staff.
- If you have not requested to escalate or take the matter further within 5 working days of the outcome of the previous stage.

If your complaint has been refused the reasons for this will be explained fully in writing.

Confidentiality

In line with The Data Protection Act 2018, all personal and sensitive information will be treated as confidential.

We will only involve other agencies with the consent of the resident involved unless we are required to by law or the information is necessary for the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults.

Our complaints procedure

The simplest and quickest way to resolve a problem is to raise it with the relevant staff member. If you feel the matter has not been resolved to your satisfaction, you may invoke the formal procedure.

Please speak to staff or check our website or for temporary timescales during the pandemic.

STAGE ONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will acknowledge your complaint within two working days.• We aim to investigate and respond to your complaint within five working days.• If you are not satisfied with the outcome of stage one, you can escalate the complaint to Stage Two.
STAGE TWO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your complaint will be reviewed by the service manager.• We aim to respond within ten working days.• If you still feel the outcome is unsatisfactory, you can escalate the complaint to Stage Three.

STAGE THREE

- At stage three an overview of your complaint will be undertaken by person/s not previously involved in the process.
- We aim to respond within ten working days.

NOTE

- There may be occasions when the investigation may take longer. We will ensure that the complainant is kept fully informed on a regular basis, even if there is no specific progress to report.

In the event that you feel Sapphire Independent Housing has failed to deal with your complaint satisfactorily after the conclusion of Stage Three you have the right to refer your complaint to your local councillor or Member of Parliament. Please be aware your local councillor or Member of Parliament will only consider your complaint after it has been through all stages of Sapphire Independent Housing c o m p l a i n t s procedure.

Alternatively, you may prefer to make your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman, however they will not look into your complaint for at least 8 weeks after the end of Sapphire Independent Housing's procedure has been exhausted, i.e. the end of Stage Three.

Contact details for the Housing Ombudsman:

Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Fax: 0207 831 1942

Email: info@housingombudsman.org.uk
www.housingombudsman.org.uk