

help us to improve

how to make a complaint

what is a complaint?

It is an expression of your dissatisfaction, however you choose to make it, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Soha, our staff or contractors. What you are complaining about affects you either as an individual resident or as group of residents.

soha welcomes complaints

At Soha Housing we actively welcome complaints from our customers. Complaints help us to identify areas of weakness so we can learn from them in order to continually improve our services.

This booklet tells you how you can make a formal complaint and also contains a form which you can use to make your complaint.

If you have asked for someone to deal with the matter on your behalf, we will be happy to respond to them with your permission. We can also let you know where you may be able to get independent advice, for example from a Citizens' Advice office (CAB) or a housing advice centre. Please ask if you would like more information about this.

We will handle your complaint in a fair and unbiased way and we can keep your complaint confidential if you prefer. We will always try our best to get an early resolution but, if we are unable to, we will proceed to stage one (see overleaf).



make your complaint

You can make a complaint by:

- going online to **www.soha.co.uk/feedback-and-complaints**.
- emailing **housing@soha.co.uk**.
- using the free tenant self-service app, downloadable for iPhones or Androids. You will need your tenancy number to register – if you are unable to find it, please give us a call.
- calling **01235 515900** or calling us free on **0800 014 15 45**
- visiting our office in Didcot.
- filling in the form at the end of this leaflet.

If you would like help in filling in the form, any member of Soha staff will be happy to help you do this. Also, if you have any particular needs, for example if you would like the complaints procedure in audio form or translated into another language, please tell us.

what happens when I complain?

stage one

Stage one of the procedure means that a senior manager or Director will contact you by phone or e-mail within three working days. They will tell you what they will do to address your concern. After they have tried to sort out your complaint, they will contact you (within 10 working days of your formal complaint) telling you what we have done and confirm this by letter or email. This could take a little longer if we have to do a full investigation, but we will keep you updated.

Hopefully we will have sorted out your complaint. However, if you are unhappy, the email or letter will tell you how to go to stage two of Soha's complaint's procedure. If you do wish to progress your complaint, you must tell the Complaints Coordinator within three months of the date of our formal response to you.

stage two

Within three working days of receiving your request to progress, the Complaints Coordinator will acknowledge your request in writing. Stage two means that your complaint will be heard by a panel of three Board members. At least one of the Board members will be a resident. You may be invited to speak directly to the members. They will consider your complaint. We will then inform you in writing of the decision. Because it may take a while for the Board members to meet, Soha will consider stage two within fifteen working days of you raising the matter at this stage. Following this, Soha will then write to you within five working days telling you of our decision. This is the final stage of Soha's complaints process. We hope that Soha will have resolved your complaint so that you are satisfied - but if you are not satisfied with Soha's final response, you can appeal to an independent body.

independent tenants' panel

Soha has a group of residents who will consider your complaint independently. The Chair of the Members' Forum will make up a Panel by asking three members from the resident portfolio holders on the Forum to meet to consider your complaint. The Panel will not include residents who are members of Soha's Board.

They will also review what Soha has done to try to sort it out and may ask to see you and someone from Soha. They will either try to resolve your complaint themselves or refer you straight to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Because of the time needed to get the Independent Tenants' Panel together, this process may take up to eight weeks. They will write to you to tell you of their view. Soha will also write to you to tell you what Soha's response is to the findings of the Tenants' Panel.

the housing ombudsman service (HOS)

The HOS is an independent organisation that offers a free and fair way of dealing with complaints against housing associations. If you decide not to use the Independent Tenants' Panel to deal with your complaint, you can contact the HOS yourself. The HOS will only consider a complaint once it has gone through the Soha formal complaints process. You must also have waited at least eight weeks before contacting the service unless you are referred by the Independent Tenants' Panel.

You can contact the HOS at:

Housing Ombudsman Service

PO Box 152

Liverpool L33 7WQ

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**

how we handle your complaint to get you results

Soha listens to its residents and aims to get complaints sorted out quickly and effectively.

1

let's get it sorted!

We aim to get things right first time when you report a problem.

Not happy?

2

what does a senior manager think?

A second pair of eyes can sometimes help. We call this **Stage One**.



The senior manager will talk to you within 2 working days.

Not happy?

3

what does soha's board think?

Three of them will consider the complaint (there will always be a tenant Board member involved). We call this **Stage Two**. This is the end of Soha's formal complaints procedure.



They will meet within 15 working days and tell you of their decision within a further 5 working days.

“can someone independent check out my complaint?”

4

yes!

The Independent Tenants' Panel will have a look and have eight weeks to do this.

Still unhappy?

5

ask the independent housing ombudsman service for their view.

complaint form

first name

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surname

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address

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postcode

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telephone (day)

.....

telephone (mobile)

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email address

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If you have already spoken to a member of Soha's staff and know their name, please write it here:

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Please tell us your complaint here and give dates where relevant. Use extra paper if you need to.

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Please tell us how you think we could best resolve your complaint.

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signature

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date

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