

Complaint Policy & Procedure

Got a complaint?

Here's what you need to do...

'...how to complain...'

We are very sorry you are not happy with our service or homes. We value complaints and use this information to improve our services. That's why we want you to tell us if something goes wrong, or if you are unhappy with our services. This leaflet tells you how you can make a complaint and what you can expect from us when handling your complaint.

First... Let's talk

Sometimes things just go wrong. People make mistakes, some things are not as they should be, and people get upset. We are so sorry if this is the case, and this leaflet will tell you all about our formal complaints process. But first... let's talk. An informal chat is often the best way. So, before going down the formal route, why not email us or give us a call and see if we can sort things out.

 **020 3859 7017**  **customerservices@starthurhomes.com**

The Complaints Process

You can make your complaint by email, by telephone, or in writing using the contact details at the end of this leaflet. We consider a complaint when you contact us with an expression of dissatisfaction about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action we should have been undertaking. If you are unhappy with our staff, or those acting on our behalf, we also consider this as a complaint. As suggested above we would welcome the opportunity to informally talk this out with you but if you want to make a *formal complaint* this leaflet will show you how we will deal with it.

We have a three-stage complaints procedure, but we will always try to deal with your complaint very quickly at Stage One. However, if the matter needs a detailed investigation, we will tell you this and keep you updated on progress.

Stage One: The Internal Review - Resolving your Complaint Quickly

We will acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days from when we receive it and immediately start taking steps to resolve it. We will aim to respond within 10 working days but if the matter needs a detailed investigation, we will tell you this and keep you updated on progress. When you get our response, if you are unhappy with it, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage Two.

Stage Two: The Internal Review - Taking a Second Look

If you are unhappy with our response at Stage One, we will ask you why and will take a second look taking into consideration your reasons. Again, we will aim to respond within 10 working days. When you get our response, if you are still unhappy, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage Three or access the Housing Ombudsman's Service.

Stage Three: An Independent View (Voluntary)

If you are unhappy with our response at Stage Two, we can ask an individual, independent of the day-to-day business of the organisation to have a look at your complaint. This might be a Non-Executive Director whose job it is to ensure good governance of St Arthur Homes. Because Stage Three requires bringing in someone from outside the operational management team, this stage can take a little longer, but we will give you an indication of how long we might take to respond to your complaint under Stage Three of our procedure. We have this additional stage because in difficult cases an independent review is often helpful. However, you are not obliged to take up this offer.

The Housing Ombudsman Service

We really hope we can resolve your concerns. However, if after we have looked at your complaint at Stage Two (or Stage Three if you opt for the independent review) you are still not happy, you can raise your matter with the **Housing Ombudsman Service**. This is a public body, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government that looks at complaints about registered providers of social housing, such as housing associations, other landlords, managers, and agents. The service is free, independent, and impartial.

The Housing Ombudsman Service website will tell you all you need to know to access their help. <https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk>

TEL: 0300 111 3000
Housing Ombudsman Service
PO Box 152
Liverpool L33 7WQ

What is a Complaint

A complaint is when you tell us you are unhappy with the action – or the lack of action – we have taken. It's also when you tell us you're dissatisfied with the standard of service or home provided by us or on our behalf.

You can complain about things like:

- delays in responding to your enquiries and requests.
- failure to provide a service we are obliged to carry out.
- our standard of service.
- dissatisfaction with our policy.
- treatment by, or attitude of a member of staff.

Your complaint may involve more than one of our services or be about someone working on our behalf.

What is NOT a Complaint

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

- a routine first-time request for a service.
- not completing a repair your lease requires you to carry out.
- a dispute with your neighbour (although in some circumstances we may be able to help you with ongoing anti-social behaviour)
- issues with your mortgage lender.
- unreasonable or vexatious complaints.
- an issue that occurred more than 6 months before St Arthur Homes was first made aware.
- an attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision following a Stage Three investigation or where the complaint has been adjudicated by the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- a *general enquiry* when a resident contact's us to ask us something concerning their home. An example might be a request to fix something (such as lighting not working in a communal area).

Advocate

You can use the help of a representative to make a complaint if you are unable to complain yourself because of physical incapacity or a lack of capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and have requested the representative to act on your behalf (proof must be provided in this instance). In addition, you may use the help of a representative if you need assistance translating into a different language.

Complaints Policy

You can find a copy of our Complaints Policy along with a copy of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and our self-assessment of compliance on our website. Please contact us if you need a printed copy of the Complaints Policy sent to you.

Finally... Let's talk!

How do I Complain?

You can complain by:

- **email:** customerservices@starthurhomes.com
- **telephone:** 020 3859 7017
- **letter:** St Arthur Homes, 2nd Floor, 48 George Street, London, W1U 7DY

When you contact us, we will need to know:

- your full name and address.
- as much as you can tell us about the complaint.
- what has gone wrong.
- how you would like us to resolve the matter.

As we said at the beginning of this leaflet, before you make a formal complaint, why not pick up the phone or email us informally so we can try to resolve your concerns. Our Complaints Procedure is thorough and available for you to use should you need to... but we hope we can sort things out without it.