

INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS

6. Making a complaint

We aim to provide a high quality of service in all areas of our work.

We welcome your complaints because they:

- let us know when we have got things wrong;
- give us the opportunity to put them right; and
- help us to make sure that they don't happen again.

We take complaints seriously and, to make sure we deal with them fairly, we have a clear complaints procedure for you to follow.

If you are thinking of making a complaint, please read this booklet carefully.

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What can I complain about?

Your rights as a PCHA resident are explained in your handbook.

You should use this complaints procedure if you feel that we have failed to deliver what we promised. For example, you may want to complain if we:

- failed to take action after you first contacted us about something;
- failed to provide a service;
- missed an appointment and did not inform you beforehand;
- failed to follow one of our procedures;
- acted unfairly; or
- got something wrong.

You should not use this complaints procedure for everyday matters such as chasing up repair requests or reporting a problem with your neighbours. For repair enquiries, please call our contact centre on 020 8451 8000. If your complaint is about anti-social behaviour, please contact your housing services officer first.

Who can complain?

This complaints procedure is for our residents and anyone on our waiting list. If you used to be one of our residents you must, if you want us to consider your complaint, take your complaint to step 1 of our formal procedure within two months of moving out.

In dealing with your complaint we will:

- help you to fill in the complaint form if you are having problems with it;
- try to sort out your complaint as quickly as possible;
- be fair and polite, and apologise if we have got something wrong;
- treat your complaint confidentially and in line with our equality and diversity policy;
- give you a full explanation of any decision we make;

- use plain English in any letters or explanations we give;
- provide information in other languages, on audio cassette, on CD or in Braille if you need it;
- monitor complaints and use them to improve our services; and
- provide information on the complaints we have received in our yearly performance report to tenants.

How can I complain?

It is important that you follow the steps shown in this booklet. We have designed this procedure to make sure that we deal with complaints as quickly as possible.

Before you make a formal complaint, please discuss the matter with a staff member. We always encourage our residents to speak to the relevant department to try and sort out the issue before they make a formal complaint. If you are not sure which department you should contact, please speak to the person you usually deal with at your local office. If we cannot sort out your complaint at this informal stage, you can make a formal complaint.

We can delay dealing with any complaint if we consider that the service department concerned has not had a clear chance to sort the matter out informally. If this is the case with your complaint, we will write to you within two working days to explain our decision. The relevant service manager will then write to you within 10 working days. If you are still not satisfied at this stage, you may then make a formal complaint.

If your complaint involves more than one of our companies, we will arrange for one company to co-ordinate the matter and reply to you on our behalf.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Step 1: Make your complaint

If we have not been able to sort out your complaint after informal discussions with a staff member, you can make a formal complaint to our Customer Relations Department. To do this you can fill in the complaint report form inside this booklet. Or, you can write to us, send us an e-mail or contact us by phone. If you contact us by phone and your complaint is very detailed, we may ask you to put it in writing.

Write to: **Customer Relations Department,
PCHA, 192 - 196 High Road,
London, NW10 2PB**

Phone: **020 8451 8087, 020 8451 8088 or 020 8451 8090**

E-mail: **complaints@pcha.org.uk**

You can also make a complaint on-line by visiting our website at **www.pcha.org.uk**

You should make it clear what your complaint is about and what you would like us to do about it.

If you are having problems filling in the form, you can ask one of our staff members to help you.

Our Customer Relations Department will log your complaint and send you a letter of acknowledgement within two working days of receiving it. This letter will include the name of the manager who will be dealing with your complaint. It is this manager's responsibility to investigate your complaint and send you a formal reply. We aim to reply within 10 working days. If we need more time to investigate your complaint, we will write to you explaining what is happening and when you can expect a full reply.

We will **not** look into complaints:

- relating to something that happened more than six months ago;

- where you have begun or are about to begin legal proceedings; or
- where you are about to apply to or have applied to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT).

We can decide not to look into complaints that are so badly written that we can't read them, use abusive language or cover issues that we have dealt with already.

Step 2: Complaints Appeal Panel

If you are not satisfied with our reply in step 1, you can take your complaint to our Complaints Appeal Panel. This panel is made up of a tenant representative, a PCHA Board member and a senior member of staff.

You must make your appeal in writing to the customer relations manager within 28 days of receiving our formal reply in step 1. Please explain why you are not happy with our reply.

The Customer Relations Department will write to tell you whether we have accepted your appeal, and when and where your hearing will take place. You can ask a solicitor or someone else to represent you and you can bring someone with you to the hearing.

The panel's decision is final and we will follow its recommendations. If you are not happy with the panel's decision, you can take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman Service, or take legal advice.

Mediation or arbitration

In special circumstances we may consider using mediation or arbitration to settle a dispute between you and us. Mediation can be carried out at step 1 of the procedure. We will use an independent service (mediation or arbitration) for these purposes. A mediator is someone trained in getting both sides to reach a solution by agreement, although their solution is not legally binding. Arbitration is a more formal method of settling disputes, and involves both sides agreeing to follow the arbitrator's decision, which will be legally binding.

If you are a resident of another landlord we have a contract with to provide housing management services, we will usually accept your complaint at step 1. Your landlord will deal with any further steps. However, if you are a PCHA resident and there is managing agent providing housing management services to your property, they should deal with all step 1 complaints. In all instances, please make sure that you take up any complaints direct with the relevant staff before you make a formal complaint. We always try to deal with issues informally if we can.

Other organisations that may be able to help

You can get more help and advice from:

- PCHA tenant representatives – through your local area office; and
- independent advisors such as any citizens advice bureau, housing advice centre or law centre.

You can also complain to:

- your local councillor – through your local town hall;
- a Member of Parliament – by writing to the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA;
- the Housing Ombudsman Service – see page 7 for details; or
- the county court – you can go to court in a variety of circumstances including complaints of sexual or racial discrimination against us, claims about repairs we have not dealt with, rent disputes and other issues.

Useful addresses

- PCHA main office, 192 - 196 High Road, Willesden, London NW10 2PB
Phone: 020 8451 8000 (Contact centre number for all enquiries and repairs)
Fax: 020 8451 8196
- **For residents in Hertfordshire:**
336 Park Avenue, Bushey WD23 2BJ
Phone: 01923 219 340
Fax: 01923 218 049

Housing Ombudsman Service

If you have been through our complaints procedure and you are still not satisfied, you can ask the Housing Ombudsman Service to investigate your complaint.

Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych
London WC2B 4HN

Phone: 020 7421 3800
Fax: 020 7831 1942
Lo-call: 0845 7125 973
Minicom: 020 7404 7092
E-mail: ihos@housing-ombudsman.org.uk
Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Translations

This document gives information about making a complaint. If you need any part of this information in large print, Braille on audio-tape or explained in your own language please contact us on the number below.

English

Dokumentigan wuxuu ku saabsan yahay in la qoro cabasho. Haddaad u baahan tahay warkan afkaaga-hooyo, afka loogu talagalay dadka aan arki karaan – afka faraha ama CD-ga ama ajeladda rekorka nala xirir. Namberkan isticmaal.

Somali

Este documento proporciona-lhe informações sobre apresentar queixas. Se necessitar de parte desta informação em caracteres aumentados, em Braille, em CD, cassette áudio ou apresentada no seu idioma, por favor contacte-nos, através do telefone abaixo indicado.

Portuguese

تمدك هذه الوثيقة بالمعلومات اللازمة عن كيفية التقدم بشكوى. إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على أي جزء من هذه المعلومات مطبوعاً بأحرف كبيرة أو بطريقة برايل أو مسجلاً على اسطوانة مدمجة أو شريط صوتي أو مشروحاً باللغة التي تتحدثها، يرجى الاتصال بنا على الرقم الموضح أدناه.

Arabic

এই দস্তাবেজটি অভিযোগ দাখিল করার সম্বন্ধে তথ্য সরবরাহ করবে। যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলোর যে কোন একটির সম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত জানতে চান, অথবা আপনার নিজের ভাষাতে ব্রেল, সিডি, অডিও টেপ-এ পেতে চান তাহলে নিম্নলিখিত নম্বরে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Bengali

Ce document contient des informations sur les procédures de réclamation. Si vous souhaitez obtenir une partie de ces informations en gros caractères, en Braille, sur CD, cassette audio ou expliqué dans votre langue, veuillez nous contacter au numéro indiqué ci-dessous.

French

આ દસ્તાવેજ ફરિયાદ કરવા વિશે માહિતી આપે છે. જો તમારે કોઈ પણ ભાગની આ માહિતી ખોઈવ, સીડી ઉપર, ઑડિયો ટેપ અથવા તમારી પોતાની ભાષામાં સમજી શકો તેની જરૂર હોય તો નીચે જણાવેલ નંબર ઉપર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

Gujarati

Este documento proporciona información sobre cómo poner una queja. Si necesita esta información en fuentes grandes, Braille, en CD, cinta o en su propio idioma, póngase en contacto con nosotros en el teléfono siguiente.

Spanish

Telephone: 020 8451 8000

