



Dear Resident

We have changed our Complaints Policy.

Here is a summary of the changes.

NEW LJHA COMPLAINTS POLICY – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why have LJHA reviewed their Complaints Policy?

In July 2020 the Housing Ombudsman published a new Complaint Handling Code, setting out good practice that will allow landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. This followed a period of consultation with various resident and landlord groups. Housing Associations are required to complete a self-assessment on existing complaints processes by the end of December 2020 and have a new complaints process and policy in place for 1 January 2021.

Just to give some context- the Housing Ombudsman is set up by law to look at complaints about the housing organisations that are registered with them. Leeds Jewish Housing Association is one of those associations registered. It is a body which helps resolve disputes involving housing providers and tenants.

2. What have been the main changes to the existing policy?

- Time frames changed to 10 days for stage 1 and 20 days for stage 2 (previously 10 days for stages 1 and 2)
- Move to a two stage process rather than 3. Previously the third stage involved a panel which included a formally engaged resident. The new policy does not include any resident presence at either stage.
- Definition of a complaint changed to reflect the Ombudsman definition within the code
- The Housing Ombudsman to be involved from the start of the process should the complainant or LJHA wish them to be
- A time frame has been introduced as to how long after the event/ issue occurring that a complaint can be made. This is 6 months.

3. How have residents been involved in reviewing the policy?

As the Complaints Officer, Kerry Phillips is responsible for overseeing the implantation and management of the complaints policy.

As part of the introduction of the new policy, Kerry spoke to the Resident Consultative Group to gain an idea on the key areas of concern and to allow them to review and make comment on the draft policy.

4. What is a complaint? How is this different to someone just expressing a concern or suggestion?

A **complaint** is universally defined as:

“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.”

Staff are trained to recognise the difference between a concern (pre-complaint), service request, enquiry and a formal complaint. Staff are encouraged to take appropriate steps to resolve the issue for residents as early as possible.

A **concern** (pre-complaint) is when we are initially advised of a problem and are given the opportunity to put things right in a short space of time. Many problems can be resolved by staff without the need to refer the matter as a formal complaint. These are known as “concerns (pre-complaint)” and are recorded and monitored proactively, as with formal complaints.

5. Are there any exceptions to someone making a complaint?

Whilst we want to be open to tenant feedback and review any concerns or complaints there are a small number of occasions when we would not use the complaints policy to deal with an issue raised. As laid out in the policy, these are as follows:

- The issue of the complaint occurred over six months ago
- The matter has already been considered under the complaints policy.
- A resident complains about the behaviour of another resident. This may be dealt with under LJHA'S anti-social behaviour policy. This policy is available on our website or tenants can request a copy by contacting us on the usual number or website.
- A resident complains about their level of rent and service charge e.g. they are unhappy with the amount of increase rather than believing it has been incorrectly calculated.

- The issue is subject to legal action or to an enforcement notice or other statutory notice
- The complainant refuses to reasonably engage with LJHA/ the process after making the complaint, is abusive to staff or acts unreasonably.
- Several related complaints are made which would be more effectively dealt with together rather than on an individual basis. However, in this instance the complaints will be logged, although the policy timescales may not apply depending upon the components to be investigated.
- If a complainant is rude or non-co-operative during the complaint's procedure.

6. If someone wanted to make a complaint, how would they do this?

We provide several ways for residents to make a complaint:

- Email using info@ljha.co.uk (available for use 24/7)
- In writing to Stonegate Way, Queenshill Avenue, Moortown LS17 6FD
- Telephone by calling 0113 320 7777
- In person by visiting the office at Stonegate Way, Queenshill Avenue, Moortown, Leeds LS17 6FD (due to current Covid 19 restrictions please telephone us first to make an appointment)
- In person, speaking to a LJHA staff member on site
- Via social media platforms Twitter and Facebook.

If anyone is unsure how to make a complaint they can contact the office using any of the methods above and ask for Kerry to contact them, as she currently oversees the Complaints process and the allocation of any complaints. She can be contacted on 07712175150 or Kerry.phillips@ljha.co.uk

7. Can someone make a complaint on my behalf?

Yes, complainants may ask another person to act on their behalf in bringing their complaint to LJHA's attention. This advocate may be a friend, relative or representative from an external organisation such as the Citizens Advice.

If a tenant would like support with this- the best idea is to contact Simon Phillips at simon.phillips@ljha.co.uk or contact him on 0113 8592228.

8. What happens after someone logs their complaint?

All complaints are acknowledged after receipt and at stage 1 a response will be communicated within 10 working days and at stage 2 after 20 working days.

If there are any delays, for any reason, we will communicate with the complainant so that they are kept informed of progress.

9. How are LJHA being monitored to make sure they handle complaints well?

We are required to report on the number of complaints we receive and what the learnings were from them to both tenants and Board. This information is also contained within the Annual Report and will be published on the LJHA website.

Throughout the process we will ensure that complainants are kept well informed.

10. How are residents able to get involved in monitoring how well complaints are handled?

This will be something that the Resident Consultative Group and Hot Topic Group will monitor.

As problems and complaints were one of the areas to be addressed from the Satisfaction Survey, the Group will be looking at this as part of an ongoing list of actions for LJHA. Further down the line, a Hot Topic Group will be set up to look at the implementation of the new policy and how it has worked well and what needs to be improved.

11. Finally, how can people learn more about complaints policy and processes?

You can view the full policy on our website at <http://www.ljha.co.uk/about-ljha/compliments-and-complaints/>. Please let us know if you would like a hard copy.

Residents are also welcome to contact Kerry via kerry.phillips@ljha.co.uk for further information or support in raising a concern or complaint.